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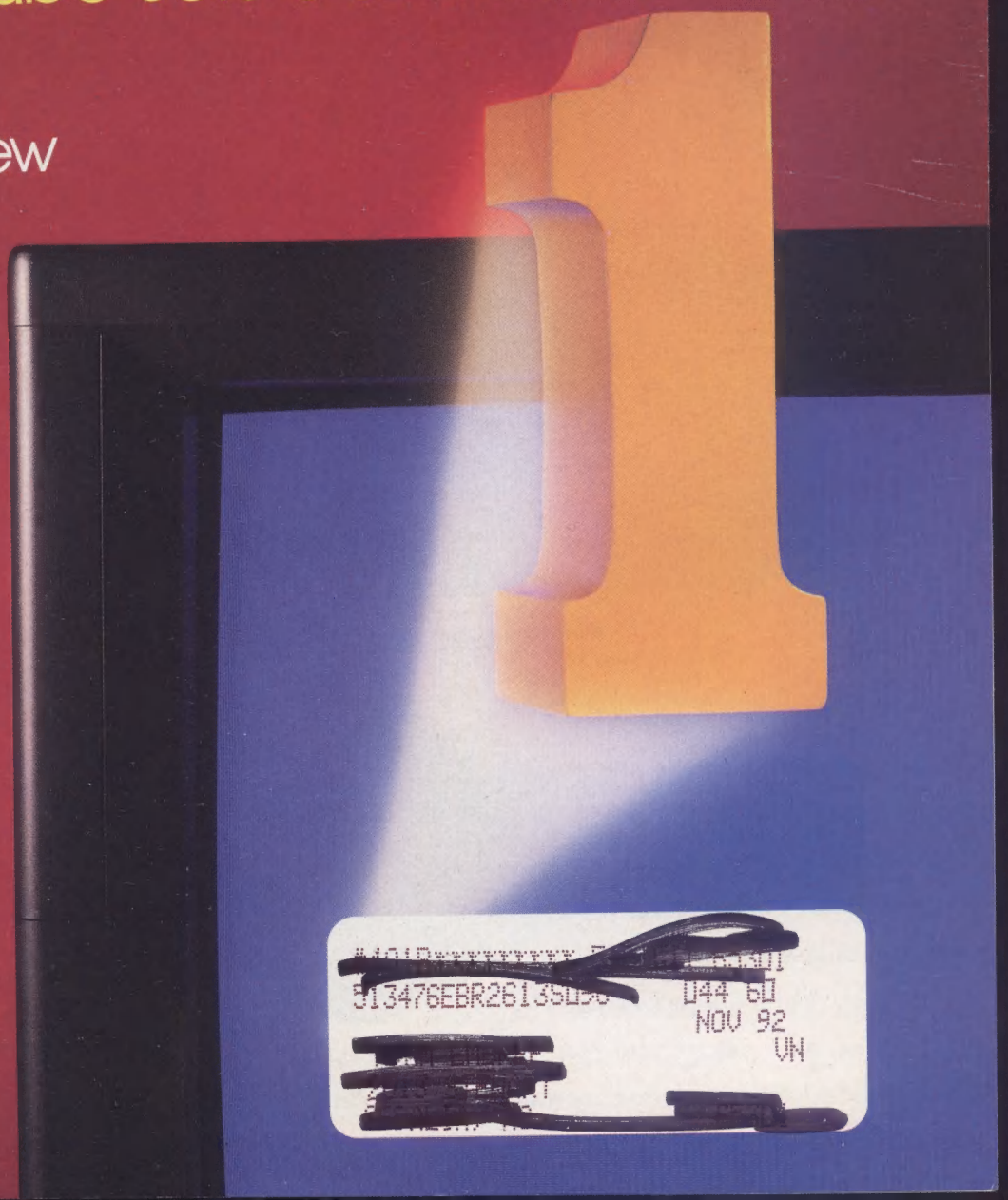
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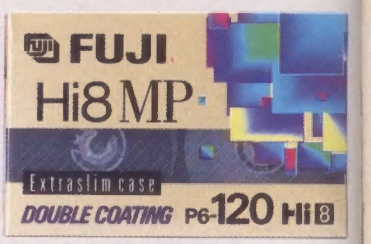


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Toshiba's CF3566A, the top tube in our 35-inch TV showdown. Photograph by Vittorio Sartor

Video Magazine
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The Audit Bureau

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Most consumers would love to add a home theater system to their home, but the idea of remodeling their viewing rooms just to accommodate the entertainment monolith is a frightening construction nightmare. Equally frightening is the confusion that results from the many remotes and wires that link the various components.

Fortunately, Mitsubishi has found a way to take the fear and complexities out of building a home theater with the HTS-100 Instant Home Theater.

The HTS-100 creates a home theater for the whole family. Its operation is so simple that all members of the family can instantly take advantage of the home theater experience.

The HTS-100 looks like an ordinary box — no blinking LEDs, superfluous buttons or extraneous knobs. The look of it is actually unimportant because it fits in back of the monitor, so no one will even know it is there.

Of course, what looks simple is actually an advanced audio-for-video device. It incorporates a four-channel amplifier with 50 watts per channel for the left, center and right channels, and 25 watts per channel for the surround speakers. With the amplifier, the HTS-100 can provide full Dolby Pro Logic Surround sound — instantly from the moment it is activated by the television's remote control.

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CHANNEL ONE

An outcry over cable

It's clear from your response to "The Trouble With Cable" (Jan. '92) that a significant number of *Video Magazine* readers are mad as hell about the shortcomings of their local cable suppliers and would like to find a way not to have to take it anymore. That's why we've devoted our back page to a special "Reader Forum" where you can check out a sampling of the scores of letters we received from outraged readers fed up with the stonewalling and obfuscation they encounter when they seek satisfaction from local cable operators.

Several things struck us about your letters, including their geographic diversity (missives arrived from more than two dozen states), but most of all the articulate, reasoned, detailed nature of the complaints, and the virtually unanimous perception that local cable operators are just not responsive to their customers.

There's a good deal of evidence that *Video Magazine* readers aren't alone in this dissatisfaction. The level of unrest was demonstrated by the Senate's 73-18 January vote in favor of re-regulating cable rates. During that same time frame we had the opportunity to participate in a radio call-in show with WCCO in Minnesota. Again, we heard first-hand from consumers who had a long list of gripes about high prices, low quality and poor service from their cable providers.

One of the major differences between the gripes expressed by *Video Magazine* readers and those cited by the Senate in debate and by radio listeners is the relative importance of the price hikes cable has imposed in the years since deregulation. Of course, price is important, especially in these economic times, but for most readers, the low-quality picture, the inability to use fully the features of top-of-the-line monitors and VCRs and the reluctant service are far more frustrating.

Video enthusiasts are willing to shell out hard-earned dollars to enjoy the newest and best products and programs. But in return, they expect to feel comfortable that the supplier is doing its darnedest to provide the best technology and service money can buy. Your message is loud and clear—cable operators just aren't doing the job.

Fortunately, there are signs of better—and more competitive—days ahead. No matter what the legislative process in the nation's capital produces (the House may be deliberating the issues as you read this), the harsh spotlight cast on cable-related issues this election year should generate positive results for consumers. We're not for increased government regulation, but if the upshot of political efforts is to encourage competition from a variety of home video delivery systems, we're for it.

Jim Barry

James. M. Barry
Editor

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Editor-in-Chief, Art Levis (1936-1991)

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FEEDBACK

Stereo controversy

Thank you for an excellent piece of reporting and for alerting consumers to the confusion which surrounds the labeling of "stereo" TVs ("Audio Input," Jan. '92). It's unfortunate some companies have muddied the accepted meaning of the word "stereo" to sell their products to unknowing consumers. While Philips and Sharp will incorporate dbx stereo circuitry beginning some time in '92, we're disappointed Thomson will continue to advertise its sets as stereo when many do not contain the proper decoding circuitry this label implies. Thomson's "XS Stereo Sound" does not properly track the dbx encoding algorithm as Thomson has claimed.

Also, one correction to the caption under the separation curves the story displayed: The signals used were swept tones. We did not use pink noise.

Win Craft
Licensing Manager
dbx Technology Licensing

The dropout rate

I must respond to Rod Woodcock's Technically Speaking column ("VHS vs. 8mm: Is smaller really better?" Nov. '91). Two years ago I made the move to Hi8. I was impressed immediately by the quality of the video and the high number of dropouts. I began running each new tape through my camcorder with the exposure set at zero, producing a black picture that made dropouts very visible. In early tapes I counted more than 100 dropouts per minute! There's been a gradual improvement in the quality of metal-evaporated tape over the last two years, but I believe the principal problem is quality control. It's time we held the manufacturer's feet firmly to the fire.

Richard S. Mavin
Salt Lake City, Utah

Constructive criticism

I recently acquired the letterboxed, remastered edition of *Apocalypse Now*—your ViVA Gold! award in the January issue being the final appraisal I required.



This Is the End: Director Francis Coppola dictated how the *Apocalypse Now* disc would close.

The disc is excellent, although it raises some questions. First, why wasn't the disc remastered from a 70mm film source? The film I saw in the theater was a 16mm anamorphic print mastered from the 70mm print, which gave it a 2.66:1 aspect ratio, far wider than that of the laserdisc. Second, I remember a different ending. As the closing credits unfolded in the theater, a night bombing run brought a fiery end to the Kurtz encampment. This is missing from the disc.

Keith Paynter
Regina, Saskatchewan

Editor's reply: A source close to the Apocalypse Now *laserdisc project told us that the 35mm interpositive from which the disc was mastered yielded the best picture because the film was originally* shot *in anamorphic 35mm. The 70mm versions were second-generation release prints blown up from the original 35mm. The film's director of photography, Vittorio Storaro, oversaw the new video transfer and felt that the disc's approximately 2.1:1 ratio was the best way to present the film. (It was shot at 2.35:1, not 2.66:1). As for the air-raid credit-scroll included on some theatrical versions of the film, director Francis Ford Coppola reportedly insisted that the new disc include the film's original ending.*

For the record

Our February "Videotest" of the Fisher FVH-8901 VHS VCR mistakenly pictured a Panasonic remote. The Fisher remote is shown at right.



Video Magazine welcomes your comments. Address correspondence to Feedback, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

GAZETTE

A man for all seasons

You could call him a *wunderkind* or perhaps an *enfant terrible*, but those terms are German and French and Kenneth Branagh is definitely Irish. Yet while still in his mere twenties, he adapted, directed and starred in a monumental filming of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, earning Oscar nominations as both actor and director. At the same time, he co-founded one of England's most renowned classical theater companies. Upon turning 30, he directed and played *two* leading roles in *Dead Again* (Paramount), an all-American detective movie and an all-American hit. You have to call him *something*.

"How about a lucky old sod!" Branagh quips. That's not quite the same as the bandied-about "young Orson Welles," but, he concedes, it's a lot less intimidating. "It certainly is scary if people are going to compare [my] quality of work [to Welles']. Still, it's wonderful to be put in the realm of people crazy enough to try something daring."



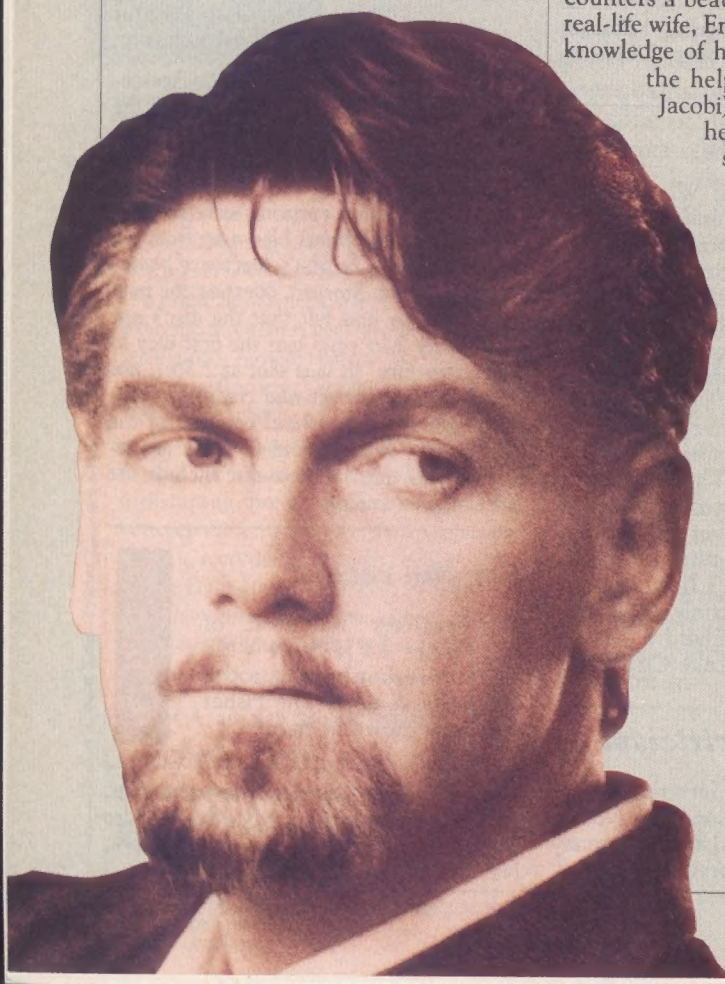
That would describe *Dead Again*. Branagh plays both a California private investigator and, in flashback, a 1940s classical composer. The detective encounters a beautiful woman (Branagh's real-life wife, Emma Thompson) with no knowledge of her identity, and through the help of a hypnotist (Derek Jacobi), incredulously explores her former life as a 1940s socialite.

It's all preposterous, but Branagh carries it through with a straight face and, just as amazingly, a straight American accent. "We spent a lot of time working on that," he says proudly, "listening to dialog tapes and working with two great dialect coaches. I also spent time in malls and movie theaters in L.A. to listen and also to watch how people walk. It's a physical thing as well, you know—people in America are a little looser than us cold Northern European types!"

He must have been thinking of Robin Williams, a supporting actor in the film, who took only a modest credit in the end-scroll. "I'd met Robin at the Academy Awards," Branagh recalls, "so I was not a complete unknown to him, and his agents did listen when we spoke. Getting him was a surprise and a delight."

Likewise with Andy Garcia, a leading man who also played a supporting role. "Andy is absolutely his own man, and he will do whatever interests him, not go with conventional Hollywood wisdom. He's very intelligent, and wants to do what he feels strongly about. And he was basically waiting for the right picture-carrying role to come along and was very happy to do this in the meantime."

—Frank Lovece



Parallel Lives: Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson (above) bring unique intensity to *Dead Again*'s black-and-white '40s flashback scenes.

Gus Van Sant's private party

Writer/director Gus Van Sant stresses that he and the cast and crew of *My Own Private Idaho* (New Line) in no way meant to denigrate the state known to most Americans only as a source of premium potatoes.

"We revere it," Van Sant insists. "We put it on a pedestal and worship it. It's a state which I used to go to to escape. The word and the sound have different meanings—it represents the mental state of the character, but it's also a real place."

Private Idaho, which Van Sant describes as "a meditation on home and family," is set in the director's adopted hometown of Portland, Oregon. River Phoenix stars as a homeless, narcoleptic street prostitute. Keanu Reeves plays his best friend, a part-time hustler living the low life only until he inherits the family

fortune on his 21st birthday.

If this sounds like grim material, it's tempered by Van Sant's fanciful, sometimes surrealistic touches and gentle style. That same style made a surprise hit of his 1989 *Drugstore Cowboy*, a story of junkies who rob Northwestern pharmacies to support their habits. Despite that success, however, Van Sant chooses to remain a Hollywood outsider: "I decided to just make movies that I want to see, projects I didn't see anywhere else. That's the great strength of working as a low-budget filmmaker rather than playing into the Hollywood system, which won't make these movies because it needs to make money."

Many of the quirkier elements of Van Sant's films result less from whimsy than from the filmmaker's need to do



Idaho Spuds: Gus Van Sant (right) counsels Keanu Reeves on their *Own Private* set in Portland, Oregon.

more with less. He was also wary, given the nature of his characters, of balancing realism against the potential for exploitation. That's why, for example, he shot several sex scenes in *Private Idaho* as series of tableaux.

"Sex scenes make it hard for both the audience and the filmmaker to keep an objective focus on what's going on. So this was a way to show that something happened without really showing it—like in old movies the lights would dim and people would wake up smoking, and you'd get the idea. We could actually show more without showing much. And it was a stylistic thing so it didn't interrupt the story."

Similarly, the narcolepsy of Phoenix's character had multiple functions. "It's a metaphor for the profound effect his emotional life has on his physical life, and also for his helplessness on the street. Plus, it was a nice way to go from one scene to the next, a time-travelling sort of gimmick."

—M. Faust



Lethal Weapon 2-1/2? Danny Glover (left) and Martin Short cut up in yet another Glover buddy movie, *Pure Luck*.

Hollywood's new colors

The past few years have brought a renaissance of young black filmmakers in America, with movies like Charles Burnett's *To Sleep With Anger*, John Singleton's *Boyz N the Hood* and Mario Van Peebles' *New Jack City* earning critical raves and unprecedented box-office success. But Danny Glover, star of the just-released *Pure Luck* (MCA/Universal) and—by his own admission—one of very few black actors who can actually "get a film made," is guardedly optimistic about opportunities for African-Americans in the film industry.

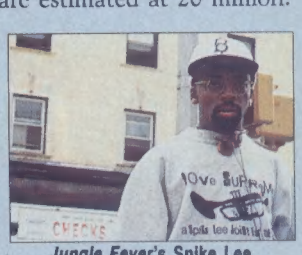
"It seems as if everyone in Hollywood is grabbing hold of a black project right now," Glover told us recently. "It's become a fad—the black film is the car phone of the '90s. But what we have to do is institutionalize that interest. And that's going to happen through the kind of films we're going to do: films like *To Sleep With Anger* that not only deal with contemporary America, but with who we are as a people, and how we became who we are."

—KK

Video Flashes

Walt's World. In yet another marketing coup, Walt Disney Home Video can now lay claim to the biggest-selling home videocassette *and* laserdisc of all time with *Fantasia*. Though it was only available to stores for 50 days before going on indefinite "moratorium," *Fantasia* sold approximately 14.2 million copies on cassette and 225,000 on disc. Previous record-holders *Batman* and *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* have each sold about 13 million. Disney's *Fantasia* figures only reflect sales in North America—worldwide sales are estimated at 20 million.

Two Steps Back. The bad news: No less than 15 video rental outlets in Rhode Island received letters in mid-January from an organization threatening to "light crosses and destroy stores...if you do not cancel your orders for *Jungle Fever*." The good news: Not a single store dropped or reduced its order for Spike Lee's film, which involves the prejudices stirred by an interracial romance. Local authorities are investigating the threats.



***Jungle Fever*'s Spike Lee**

Longtime Companion. The updated edition of *The Laser Video Disc Companion*, a complete guide to laserdisc software, has just hit the stands. Written by Douglas Pratt, editor and publisher of the invaluable monthly *Laserdisc Newsletter*, the *Companion* reviews the content and technical quality of more than 4,000 titles on disc. Introductory chapters sum up the history and technology of the format, but the appendices—which list every laserdisc released between 1981 and 1990, including reissues—are a real boon for collectors. The $24.95 *Companion* is available in stores or by writing to New York Zoetrope, 838 Broadway, New York, NY 10003. Call 800-242-7546 for phone orders or information. Shipping costs an additional $5.

Imagine the Ultimate Videomaking Machine

You step out from behind your camcorder... yet it continues to operate exactly as you want it to... panning, tilting and zooming with astonishing accuracy to capture precisely the right events... recording sound with flawless clarity... while you step into the picture and enjoy the most exciting video you've ever created -- from in front of the camera!



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Introducing CameraMan™ from ParkerVision, the biggest breakthrough in video since the camcorder.

With CameraMan, you can create the most exciting videos you've ever imagined. The revolutionary CameraMan tracking system follows the action with the precision of a professional camera operator, while you enjoy all the fun of being in your own videos.

For the first time, you'll be able to preserve special moments as they should be, with everyone included. And CameraMan works with virtually every camcorder on the market!

A New World of Creativity

The exclusive CameraMan Wand™ creates an invisible link to the base unit, tracking the action with perfectly-timed camera moves, at distances up to 80 feet. The Wand also incorporates a professional-quality wireless microphone to record sound at the source with brilliant clarity.



CameraMan's fluid pans, tilts and zooms are smoother and swifter than any hand-held camera. Place it almost anywhere for creative new perspectives.

Create fully-automated videos, or access the Wand's Command Center and control CameraMan from your easy chair. A convenient Location Pre-Set function lets you program up to four locations for instant recall at the press of a button.



Pass the Wand among guests to make your next party come alive. Leave the kids alone with it for some heart-warming candid moments. Take CameraMan along on special occasions to preserve family memories with no one left out. CameraMan is equally essential for dozens of professional uses, from wedding videos to business presentations.

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VIDEOTESTS

VIDEOTEST 629

MITSUBISHI *S-VHS-C camcorder*

The HS-CX7U is one of two subcompacts marking Mitsubishi's re-entry into the U.S. camcorder market. The other, the HS-CX4U, is a basic VHS-C model. Both feature Mitsubishi's new StableCam dual-gyro digital image stabilization system. It distinguishes between operator shake and normal camera and subject movement, and only corrects for shaking. Unlike Panasonic's image stabilizer, which corrects only for up-and-down movement, this one also corrects for side-to-side movement. A button on the side activates the stabilizer.

The new Mitsubishi subcompacts use the most advanced auto exposure system we've seen. It controls an amazing number of parameters: shutter speed, iris, white balance, autofocus sensitivity and focal center. A user can select programs with settings optimized for outdoor ski/beach, sunset, fast sports with telephoto, party indoor/spotlight, golf with low blurring and portrait with extreme close-ups.

Other desirable features include a one-page titler in eight colors with reverse, auto/sun/artificial light white balance, an integral lens cap and a letterbox mode that puts black bars on the top and bottom of the picture for the look of a widescreen movie. It also has synchro edit capability, so it can be set up for one-touch editing with ■ synchro edit-equipped Mitsubishi VCR.



Picture Perfect: Mitsubishi's HS-CX7U features a dual-axis image stabilizer that fixes shaky shots.

HIGHLIGHTS Mitsubishi designed its HS-CX7U for the casual shooter who wants the convenience of a subcompact point-and-shoot with the quality of S-VHS-C video and hi-fi audio. Its innovative features include a dual-axis image stabilizer and six program auto exposure modes. It produces an average picture, very good hi-fi audio and fair linear audio. Ease of use is good, but complicated by a menu system. Overall performance is good. If you're looking for an S-VHS-C subcompact, you should check out this $1,299 model.

Mitsubishi HS-CX7U S-VHS-C Camcorder

Price: $1,299

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 1.4 lbs. without battery and cassette; 4-3/8 x 4-1/8 x 8-1/8 inches

Image Sensor: 1/3-inch CCD

Lens: f/1.8, 8x (8-64mm) power zoom

Filter Diameter: 49mm with supplied attachment ring

Minimum Focusing Distance: about 1/2 inch

Autofocus: TTL, switchable to powered manual

Minimum Illumination: 9.4 lux for 50 IRE

Iris: auto with BLC and six event modes

Auto Fade: to/from white

Shutter Speeds (sec.): normal (1/60), 1/125, 1/250, 1/500, 1/1,000, 1/2,000, 1/4,000

White Balance: auto, switchable to indoor or outdoor

Viewfinder: electronic with diopter adjustment and onscreen indicators for counter memory, real-time counter, title color, battery remaining indicator, record/digital tracking, tape remaining, S-VHS, tape speed, operating mode, battery/clock battery/dew/tape alarm, event indicator, StableCam, manual white balance, shutter speed, fade, manual focus, date and time

Viewfinder Controls: focus, brightness

VCR Controls: play, stop, pause, fast forward/search, rewind/search

Microphone: stereo

Jacks: A/V out, S-video out, remote control

Tape Formats & Speeds: S-VHS-C, VHS-C; SP/EP

Video Heads: 4

Cue & Review Search: 3x, SP; 7x, EP

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: 6-1/4 min./7-1/4 min. for TC-30

Remote Pause: through wired remote control or edit line of A/V out cable

Program Start

Locator/Index/Cue: auto mark under certain circumstances

Audio: linear mono, hi-fi AFM stereo

Titles/Graphics: one-page digital superimposer in one of eight colors with reverse, and date/time record

Special Features: image stabilizer, six program auto exposure modes, still frame, counter memory, dual flying erase heads, wind filter, integral lens cap, letterbox mode, synchro edit

Absent Features: frame advance, slow motion, speed play, audio dub, video dub, insert edit, auto rewind, standard jacks for audio/composite video output, A/V input, mic input, tracking control, headphone jack, wireless remote control

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: S-VHS—380 lines; VHS—240 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): unweighted luminance—43.7 SP, 36.5 EP; weighted luminance—48 SP, 43.6 EP; unweighted video—39.5 SP, 37.7 EP; weighted video—45.7 SP, 44.2 EP; chroma AM—40.3 SP, 37.5 EP; chroma PM—35.8 SP, 35.2 EP

Audio Frequency Response: hi-fi—20 Hz-20 kHz, +0.1/2.3 dB; linear (-3 dB)—100 Hz-5 kHz SP, 100 Hz-4 kHz EP

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range: 77.8 dB

Linear Audio S/N: 42.7 dB

Audio Distortion: hi-fi—0.4%; linear—0.9%

RATINGS

Picture: average

Audio: hi-fi—very good linear—fair

Ease of Use: good

Overall: good

VIDEOTEST PHOTOGRAPHS: LES MORSILLO

It doesn't have jacks for headphones or an external microphone, both of which are necessities for serious shooting. This camcorder is really designed for casual users who want better picture and sound quality than standard VHS-C subcompacts offer. Advanced users should consider Mitsubishi's HS-C35, a larger S-VHS-C model with interchangeable front lenses.

The HS-CX7 is about the size of Sony's ubiquitous TR-series camcorders. Thanks to its menu system, it has few exposed controls. While this minimizes control clutter, it often demands several button pushes where, on many camcorders, one would suffice. Fortunately, it does have buttons for important functions like backlight compensation.

The viewfinder folds over 180 degrees for easier carrying and storage. Under it sit play, stop and pause buttons. The zoom rocker does triple-duty: It also makes menu selections and adjusts manual focus. The camcorder has an S-video output, ■ multipin audio/video output and a jack for an optional wired remote control. It has no A/V input, so you can't record from other sources.

The placement of playback controls under the viewfinder proves ■ bit awkward, especially because the HS-CX7 doesn't include ■ remote control. The optional, full-function wired remote makes playback much easier. Since an adapter for use in a VHS machine is supplied, playback on a VCR is encouraged. If you intend to shoot in S-VHS-C, you'll need an S-VHS deck, or one of the new VCRs with S-VHS Quasi Playback (SQPB), which play S-VHS tapes at VHS quality. Ease of use is good.

The camcorder has no video or audio input, so we made measurements using tapes recorded on other machines. Picture quality is average for S-VHS—not outstanding, but serviceable. Unlike most VHS-C camcorders, it has no tracking controls. Its hi-fi audio is very good. The linear audio is only fair, but that's probably not too important. Because there's no audio dub or video dub capability, there's little reason to use the linear track audio.

Overall, we rate the HS-CX7 good. Its picture quality is nothing special, but the highly useful stabilizer and program event modes take up the slack. ■

VIDEOTEST 630

PROSCAN *combi player*

Combi players come in three basic types: budget models with few features, models with automatic side-changing, and top-of-the-line players with side-changing and digital effects. Because almost all combi players perform very well, buying one is simple—just decide which features you want. If you don't need digital effects, but enjoy the convenience of automatic side-changing, the ProScan PSLD41 is definitely worth a look.

ProScan is the new, upscale brand from Thomson Consumer Electronics, makers of RCA and GE products. For the most part, the PSLD41 does what other players in its price range do. It plays all sizes of laserdiscs and CDs, it automatically changes sides when the first side of ■ laserdisc is through playing and it offers a wide range of programmed play options, so you can rearrange tracks on a CD.

It does offer a few unusual features, including video noise reduction, which reduces sharpness but improves the picture on noisy discs. A peak audio level search button instantly locates the loudest section of a CD, so you set the recording level of an audio cassette deck for dubbing without worrying about oversaturating the tape. There's also a CD mode that produces a purer sound from CDs.

It has no digital effects, so it produces still frames, slow motion and speed play only on CAV discs. CLV search produces a flipping picture instead of the clear scan produced by recent players from Panasonic and Sony. (Strangely enough, it did perform clear scan when used with the remote from a ProScan TV set.)

Like most combi players, the PSLD41 offers many playback modes. The programmed play mode lets you select up to 24 chapters or tracks to be played in any order, and allows you to insert ■ pause between tracks. The repeat function may be combined with programmed play or random play, and may be used for ■ single chapter/track, ■ side or both sides of a laserdisc. The edit option fits an optimum number of tracks into an allotted time, which is handy for copying CDs to audio cassettes. The visual calender on the display indicates the number of tracks available (up to 19) and the one being played, with separate displays for side A and side B.

The front panel and the remote control carry essentially the same set of controls found on any combi player with side-changing, with the additions of buttons for CD mode, video noise reduction and peak audio level search.

Because it has no RF output, you can't connect this player directly to ■ TV set that has no video/audio jacks.

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HIGHLIGHTS With many interesting features and a sleek appearance, ProScan's PSLD41 succeeds as an upscale combi player. It offers automatic side-changing, but no digital effects, so it will not produce still frames or slow motion from most laserdiscs. Its CD mode turns off all video circuitry to reduce interference, opens the tray only far enough to accept a CD, and speeds up operation. Picture, sound, ease of use and overall performance are all very good. It's an especially good choice if you own other ProScan gear.





Disc Delight: ProScan's PSLD41 offers side-changing, noise reduction and a special CD mode.

VIDEOTEST 631

YASHICA *8mm camcorder*



Great Eight: Yashica's KD-M770 camcorder is packed with features, like a 10x zoom and infrared autofocus.

Kyocera has marketed camcorders under the brand names Finemovie 8, Kyocera and Yashica. To resolve this confusion, it now plans to use only the Yashica brand for video equipment. Its camcorders are functionally identical to certain Sony models, but offer longer warranties, with extra-cost extended warranties also available. The KD-M770 reviewed here is similar to Sony's CCD-F501 8mm camcorder.

Like almost all modern camcorders, it has an auto lock mode that puts exposure, shutter, focus, white balance and backlight control in automatic mode. It also offers two programmed auto exposure (AE) modes for portraits and sports. Six manual shutter speeds are available up to 1/4,000 second and its manual white balance offers hold, indoor and outdoor settings.

A large sports viewfinder hinges up for low-angle shooting, and an age/event identifier imprints years and months from one of three dates you select—you can add the kids' ages automatically as you videotape them. A digital superimposer captures titles and applies black outlines to them, which makes them much easier to read. It also scrolls titles up or down. An optional beep warns you each time the run/stop button is pushed, and a wireless remote lets you control it in camera or VCR mode.

The KD-M770 has enough jacks for the most advanced shooters, including external microphone, mic power, video/stereo audio input and output, and an AC adapter which also has A/V output jacks. This adapter makes connecting the KD-M770 to a TV set very easy—just clip the adapter onto the back of the camcorder and you're ready to go. There's also a LANC jack, so it can be connected to any of the 10 or so LANC-compatible editing controllers available, or to Sony VCRs with editing jacks.

The KD-M770's front end looks

HIGHLIGHTS Why do large 8mm camcorders like Yashica's KD-M770 remain popular when much smaller ones are available? Because they're comfortable to shoot with and easy to use. The $1,399 KD-M770's noteworthy features include a 10x zoom lens, stereo sound and programmed auto exposure modes for sports and portraits. Picture quality is good and ease of use is very good, but audio quality is only average to good. Its overall performance is good, but smaller and more feature-laden models are available in the same price range.

Yashica KD-M770 Camcorder

Price: $1,399

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 2.8 lbs.; 5-1/2 x 4-3/8 x 12-3/4 inches

Image Sensor: 1/2-inch CCD, 270,000 gross pixels



Lens: f/1.6, 10x (8.5-85mm) two-speed power zoom with macro

Filter Diameter: 46mm

Minimum Focusing Distance: 30 inches; almost to face of lens in macro

Autofocus: infrared

Minimum Illumination: measured—3.6 lux for 50 IRE

Iris: auto with programmed AE modes for portrait and sports

Auto Fade: to black

Shutter Speeds (sec.): normal, 1/100, 1/250, 1/1,000, 1/2,000, 1/4,000

White Balance: auto/hold/indoor/outdoor

Viewfinder: electronic with LED indicator for recording/battery/tape and onscreen indicators for wind noise, backlight, white balance, shutter speed, fader, manual focus, transport mode, tape counter, title mode/color, auto superimpose, zero memory, low battery, low/no tape, dew, caution, age, time/date and clock battery

Viewfinder Controls: diopter focus, viewing angle

VCR Controls: stop, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, pause, frame advance, slow and record

Microphone: stereo electret condenser

Jacks: external mic, mic power, headphones, LANC remote, video, stereo audio and DC out for RF unit

Tape Format & Speeds: 8mm, SP record, SP/LP play

Video Heads: 2

Edit Search: 1x

Cue & Review Search: 5x forward, 7x reverse

Fast Forward/Rewind Time: 6-1/4 min. for P6-120

Remote Pause: LANC

Remote Control: IR wireless with a hold switch, zoom rocker and buttons for start/stop, data screen, counter reset, zero memory, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, direction/frame reverse, stop, direction/frame forward, pause, slow, 2x and record (2)

Audio: hi-fi AFM stereo

Titles/Graphics: one-page digital superimposer in 8 colors with scroll, mix and black border capability

Special Features: flying erase head, still frame, frame advance, slow motion, speed play, insert edit, auto rewind, counter memory

Absent Features: digital audio, manual iris

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 250 lines

S/N Ratios (dB): unweighted video—49.7, weighted video—42.8, chroma AM—42.7, chroma PM—38.2

Audio Frequency Response: 50 Hz-12.5 kHz, +0.1/-3.6 dB, -5.6 dB at 20 Hz, -7.8 dB at 20 kHz

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range: 65.3 dB

Audio Distortion: 0.3%

RATINGS

Picture: good

Audio: average/good

Ease of Use: very good

Overall: good

zoom lever and manual focus ring instead of the internal focus mechanism found on many new machines. But this has advantages—the manual controls allow quick, precise adjustment, and very fast or slow zooming. The only disadvantage is that while most newer camcorders offer automatic macro focus, the KD-M770's macro must be activated manually. Another oldie-but-goodie is the infrared autofocus, which doesn't work well through windows or screens, or on slanted subjects, but is otherwise very fast and stable.

For beginners with little knowledge of photography, the program AE modes should be a big help. The portrait mode throws the background out of focus, drawing attention to the subject. The sports mode uses the highest shutter speed practical for the lighting conditions, so you get little or no blurring in slow motion and still frame playback modes.

The remote control is slightly longer than ■ pack of cigarettes. It controls all major VCR functions, so you can control playback from your easy chair. It also has a run/stop button and ■ zoom rocker, so the operator can set the camcorder on a tripod and get in the picture while still controlling the camcorder. A lock switch deactivates the remote.

Large camcorders do have their advantages, namely great balance and plenty of room for dedicated controls large enough to see and use easily. Except for a couple of titling options displayed in the viewfinder, there's no confusing menu system, and the auto lock switch makes it easy to use for beginners. Ease of use is very good.

Picture quality is good, aided by an impressive 3.6 lux low-light shooting capability. Audio quality is only average to good, for an overall rating of good. ■

LASERDISC PLAYER

continued from page 13

However, you can daisy-chain it with ■ VCR, or use an RF modulator. Fortunately, only today's least expensive TV sets now lack video/audio jacks, and you're unlikely to use one of those sets with a laserdisc player.

Two of the PSLD41's outputs may or may not be useful for you. It has an S-video output, but on laserdisc players, this is only useful if your monitor has ■ low-quality luminance/chrominance separator. Compare the picture with an S-video cable and a standard cable, and use the one that produces the better picture. Also, the digital audio output may give you better sound if you use ■ high-quality external digital-to-analog converter.

Operational ease is very good—it works like most other combi players, but it may take a little time to learn all of the options because there are so many. Picture and audio quality are also very good. Like other combi players, its main weakness is in chroma PM signal-to-noise ratio. The CD mode does not produce measurably better CD performance, but might show improvement if connected to a top-notch audio system. Our overall rating is very good. ■

ProScan PSLD41 Laserdisc Player

Price: $899

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 18.4 lbs.; 4-3/4 x 17 x 17-1/4 inches

Jacks: S-video, video (2), stereo audio (2), optical digital audio, headphones

Disc Formats: LD—12- & 8-inch, CAV and CLV; CDV—5-inch; CD—5- & 3-inch

Rapid Search: by time/frame, chapter/track, point A-B

Cue & Review Search: 2x, 3x, 10x, 30x

Counter Digits/Memory: CAV frame—5, CLV/CDV/CD time—4 (mins:secs.), chapter/track—2/visual index up to 19, memory points A & B

Program Start Locator/Index/Cue: CAV—frame or chapter; CLV/CDV/CD—time or chapter/track; all—point A, programmed chapter/track, or random chapter track

Audio: digital and FM analog, both stereo or two independent tracks

Special Features: automatic side-changing, shuttle dial, video noise reduction, peak level search, still frame, frame advance, slow motion, speed play, programmed play of up to 24 chapter/tracks, program/auto edit chapter/tracks to fit specified time, numerous repeat functions (from point A, segment A-B, chapter/track, side/both sides, program and random)

Absent Features: remote port, digital effects, clear scan, RF input and output

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 410 lines

Picture S/N (dB): unweighted luminance—51.2, weighted luminance—55.7, unweighted video—49.6, weighted video—55.6, chroma AM—47.6, chroma PM—40.8

Audio Frequency Response: digital—10 Hz-20 kHz, +0.3/-0.1 dB; analog—20 Hz-20 kHz, +3.2/-1.9 dB

Dynamic Range: 99.2 dB (digital)

Audio S/N: 73.6 dB (analog)

Audio Distortion: digital—0.002%, analog—0.024%

RATINGS

Picture: very good

Audio: very good

Ease of Use: very good

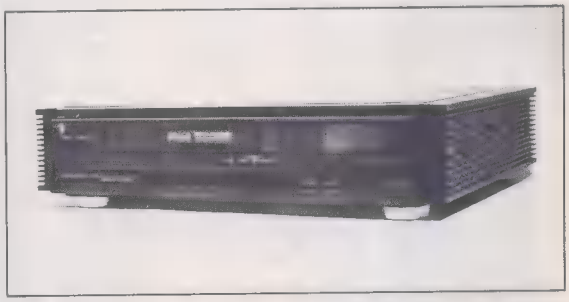
Overall: very good

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VIDEOTEST 632

ZENITH

27-inch monitor/ receiver

Although its teak finish and console design give Zenith's ZB2751 a traditional look, the set incorporates an up-to-date Bose sound system designed to fulfill the potential of laserdisc and VHS hi-fi sound. The pedestal's glass doors conceal a rear-firing Bose Acoustimass woofer enclosure and space for videotapes and a VCR or laserdisc player. A midrange/tweeter speaker resides in each leg of the pedestal. The set has its own surround-sound decoder, which uses Bose VideoStage Logic, and a rear-speaker amplifier. Zenith supplies two surround speakers with cables, so setting up a full surround system takes only minutes.

The set employs many advanced video features, including light sentry, which compensates for changing ambient light; video sentry, which preserves your last custom picture settings; and a macro system that memorizes a sequence of up to five commands and executes them with one touch. It also has picture-in-picture, which shows a picture from the TV tuner and a picture from the video input. Cable input loop-through allows you to use your remote to select unscrambled cable TV programs.

The controls on the set are in a ver-



Surround Savings: Zenith's ZB2751 costs more than most 27-inch sets, but because it includes a surround-sound decoder and speakers, its price is very reasonable.

HIGHLIGHTS For years, Zenith and Bose have been working together to get better sound from TV sets. The fruits of their collaboration can be seen in the ZB2751, a 27-inch monitor/receiver that incorporates a Bose sound system and surround-sound decoder. Zenith even supplies a pair of surround speakers. The picture is very good, audio is good to very good, ease of use is good and overall performance is good to very good. At $1,395, it's costlier than most 27-inch sets, but because it saves you the cost of an external surround-sound system, it's a good deal.

Zenith ZB2751 TV With Sound By Bose



Price: $1,395

Weight & Size (h/w/d): 242 lbs.; 39 x 31 x 22 inches

Screen Size: 27 inches diagonal

Speakers: one 6-inch woofer, two 2-1/2-inch midrange/tweeters, two 4-1/2-inch surrounds in individual cabinets

Type of Tuning: frequency synthesis

Method of Tuning: programmable scan on set, scan plus direct access on remote

Broadcast Tuning Range: 2 to 13, 14 to 69

Cable Tuning Range: 122 channels

Remote Control: IR wireless with indicators for auxiliary, VCR and TV, and buttons for auxiliary, VCR, TV, on/off, source, flashback, channel up and down, volume up and down, select up and down, adjust left and right, menu, 10-digit keypad, enter, macro, PIP, freeze, mute, search, swap, timer, quit, record, stop, pause, index, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search and TV/VCR

Inputs: 1 S-video, 1 video, 1 stereo audio, 2 RF

Outputs: 1 loop-through video/stereo audio, 1 stereo audio (to external amp), 1 loop-through of antenna/decoder in, surround amp out

External Speaker Connectors: RCA-type pin jack for surround only

Internal Audio Amplifier Power: 29 W total

Special Features: picture-in-picture, sleep timer, integral surround-sound decoder and amp, light sentry, video sentry

Absent Features: headphone jack

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: 550 lines

Picture S/N (dB): video—54.1, chroma AM—62.4, chroma PM—62.2

Accuracy of Colors: very good

Audio Frequency Response: at stereo audio outputs—20 Hz-10 kHz, +0.7/-2.7 dB

Audio S/N: 63.6 dB

Total Harmonic Distortion: 0.6%

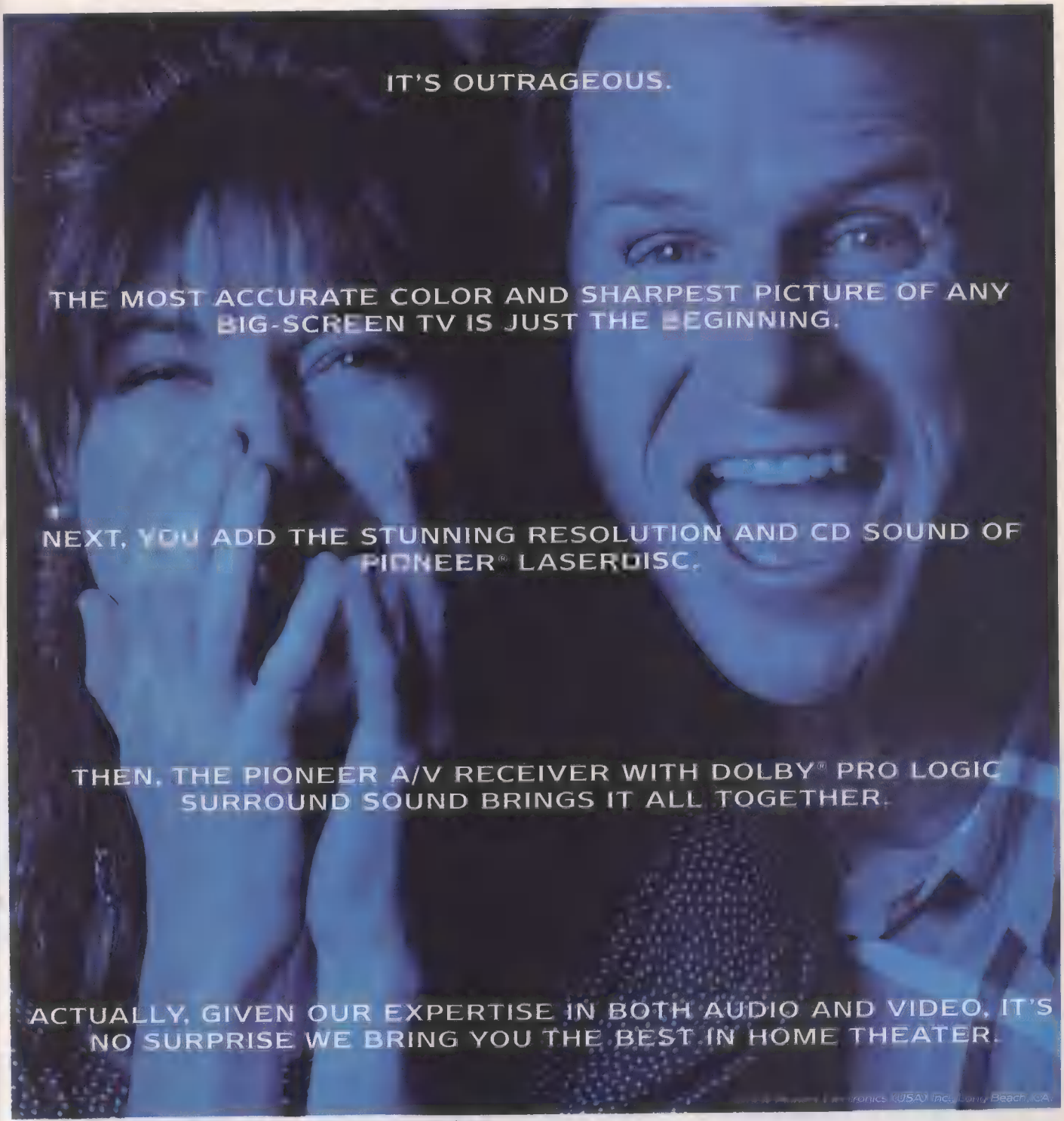
RATINGS

Picture: very good

Audio: good/very good

Ease of Use: good

Overall: good/very good



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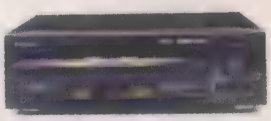
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CLD-3090 CD/LaserDisc Player.

tical column along the right edge of the bezel. These control the usual functions, like volume and channel, and also access the menu system.

The remote control operates the TV set, a VCR and one other piece of equipment. It comes programmed to operate recent Zenith VCRs, and may be reprogrammed to operate earlier Zenith models and those from other manufacturers. The remote accesses all TV functions, including PIP with freeze and swap options.

Setup is very easy because you only need to make connections for power, surround speakers, antenna/cable and ■ video/audio source. But if you use more than one video source, you'll have problems. Although the set has inputs for video and S-video, it has only one stereo audio input. Hooking up a VCR and a laserdisc player will require daisy-chaining the two components, or using a switcher or audio/video receiver. There is also a variable audio output, which is affected by the bass and treble controls.

Many functions are activated through ■ system with five main menus: source, setup, features, audio and video. As with previous Zeniths, the main menu occupies most of the screen, but on this model, selections that involve picture adjustments use superimposed displays so you can see the effect of the adjustments. Ease of use is good.

Picture quality is very good. Accuracy of colors is very good, although whites are slightly warm. Audio quality is good to very good. The woofer delivers discernible response down to 40 Hertz, which is impressive for a TV sound system. The Bose VideoStage system logic decodes the surround information and subtracts varying amounts of signal from the front channels for ■ constant output power. Steering artifacts are low and can be recognized only if your ear is very close to the surround speakers. Our overall rating is good to very good. For those looking for surround sound in a simple setup, the ZB2751 is an attractive option. ■

TECH TIPS

Fluorescent fix

Fluorescent light tends to give video subjects an unnatural shading. The automatic white balance in most camcorders usually corrects for this effect, but sometimes better results can be achieved by putting an FD filter over the lens. FD filters are available at good camera and video stores.

Allen D. Skocelas
Manistee, Michigan

Creativity with Canon's A1 Digital

The Canon A1 Digital Hi8 camcorder has only fade to white—no fade to black. But you can create the same effect using the overlap button. To fade in *from* black, put the lens cap on, hit the overlap button, record for as long as you want in black, and hit the run/stop button. Now remove the cap, compose your shot and start shooting. Your picture will fade in from the black you just recorded. Reverse the steps for a fade *to* black. You can even fade to and from colors by shooting colored paper instead of putting the lens cap on.

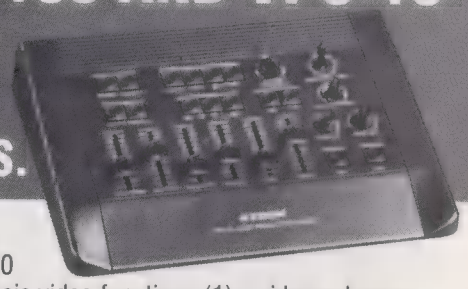
Glenn C. Faigen
Silver Spring, Maryland

Two ways to create professional quality videos without breaking the bank!

AZDEN'S STATE-OF-THE-ART VE-100 AND VPC-10

TURN THOSE HOURS OF TAPES INTO EXCITING, PROFESSIONAL VIDEOS.





Winner of a Design & Engineering Award at the Consumer Electronics Show, the VE-100 allows you to create up to 100 perfectly cut scenes. It's compatible with all formats. Utilizing the infrared signal of the recording deck, and incorporating the "VITC" time code system, it allows you to make seamless edits, with 3 frame accuracy! You can combine several tapes, and add audio from an external source. Easy to learn, and easy to use, you can be editing within an hour after connecting the equipment. There is nothing of comparable quality on the market even close to our Suggested Retail - $459.95.

Our newest product, the VPC-10 is truly unique. Combining 3 basic video functions (1) ■ video enhancer and signal processor to improve the picture quality and enhance colors, (2) a Special Effects Generator, to create numerous exciting wipes, such as venetian-blind, curtain, and mosaic. (3) a "paint box" for changing the colors on a segment of the picture. All of these functions can be combined in an infinite number of patterns, sizes, colors, and wipes. Additional Features: ❑ Compatible with all systems ❑ Record from either of 2 sources ❑ split-screen for comparing and altering the incoming and outgoing video signal ❑ Create positive or negative images ❑ 2 outputs for making 2 copies simultaneously ❑ Color generator controlled by joystick for creating entire color spectrum ❑ Fade between video picture and background color or effect ❑ Manual editing can be accomplished by using the fade to black button. Suggested Retail - $459.95

AZDEN® 147 New Hyde Park Road, Franklin Square, NY 11010 (516) 328-7500
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a video magazine advertising supplement

PIONEER®

home theater



home theater

what exactly is a home theater? Some say it is a big picture. Others a cinema-like sound. The possibilities of what a home theater can be are as endless as our imaginations, but one thing is common to all variations — a home theater is the integration of high quality sound and video. And no single company has worked so hard to bring this latest phase in the evolution of audio/video to consumers as Pioneer.

Home Theater of Dreams

Build the finest audio/video system and the audience will come.

how should you assemble your home theater? What components does it entail? These are the type of questions that often confound consumers, preventing them from taking the logical step toward experiencing the ultimate sights and sound that today's technology can deliver.

Pioneer Electronics has developed the necessary LaserDisc players, speaker systems, audio/video receivers and projection TVs to create a home theater that fits your individual needs. Their extensive line of audio/video components allows simplified connections, unified remote control operation, and electronic specifications that integrate for the maximum home entertainment experience.

High quality integration of both audio and video begins with a combi-disc player like Pioneer's CLD-M90, which combines an advanced LaserDisc player with a five-disc compact disc carousel for convenient audio playback.

The CLD-M90 brings 425 lines of horizontal video resolution to the home theater along with a dazzling CD-sound, making it a key component in any viewing room. As a CD changer, the CLD-M90 has all the most sought-after features that are found in dedicated units. It can hold up to five CD's, which can remain in the unit even while watching a LaserDisc feature, and it also has an ADLC function that automatically adjusts the individual disc output levels, so you can dub your CDs to tape with perfect sound consistency. Features common to both audio or video uses of the unit include random accessing of any disc or track and on-screen displays which inform you of the status of the discs at all times. The CLD-M90 is currently available at a suggested retail price of $700.



Pioneer VSX-9900S Audio/Video Receiver

A high-powered audio/video receiver is your next necessary component buy. For signal routing, system powering and operation convenience, the a/v receiver serves as the centerpiece of every home theater design. One deluxe example is Pioneer's VSX-9900S a/v receiver with built-in digital signal processing. The VSX-9900S (suggested retail of $1120) has a built-in amplifier that delivers 125 watts of power to the front channel and 40 watts to the center and rear channels. Moreover, the digital signal processor works either in conjunction with Dolby Pro Logic or custom surround fields which include concert hall, jazz club, disco, stadium and church sound settings. Other convenient features include a large fluorescent dot matrix display with five-channel level meters, a jog dial for precise sound adjustments and a video signal selector.

Stereo sound of this caliber must be complemented by the finest big screen TV. For this, Pioneer recommends the SD-P5053 50-inch rear projection television. Like the VSX-9900S, the SD-P5053 also has specialized sound fields, including theater, music and simulated stereo modes. It features advanced picture-in-picture, which not only places a smaller picture in the corner of the screen, but also divides the screen into four or nine

segments for multi-program viewing.

As evidence of its advanced imaging prowess, the SD-P5053 offers an exceptionally wide horizontal viewing angle of 140 degrees, so that every viewer in the house can see the video picture without neck strain. The image produced is a bright 420 foot-lamberts and it is accurately adjusted for both brightness and contrast by a proprietary dynamic picture optimizer. The SD-P5053 has a suggested retail price of $3900.

There are no real hard-set rules for building a home theater from scratch or for expanding your current audio system to accommodate the finest video signals. Just combine a high quality picture with high quality sound and you're there.

And just remember one simple name — Pioneer.

One Singular Sensation

combination LaserDisc players have become central components in the home theater with their ability to offer the best in both sight and sound. However, Laser Karaoke combination players add a new dimension to the experience by offering you a chance to become the star in your own home theater productions.

With a Laser Karaoke combination player, like the CLD-V820 from Pioneer Laser Entertainment, you no longer are confined to the events that are happening on-screen and through the speakers — you can interact with the entertainment itself. Karaoke, which means "empty orchestra" in Japanese, lets you sing along with your favorite songs or your favorite music videos. These machines have been gaining in popularity in clubs all around the country and now are available to bring a new level of entertainment right into your living room.



the Pioneer CLD-V820 Laser Karaoke Combi-Player

The CLD-V820 is a prime example of why a Laser Karaoke combination player is the ideal component for today's home theater. Not only does it play LaserDiscs with a full range of options that are found on high-end dedicated machines (i.e. flip side play), but it also plays compact discs, in addition to giving you the ability to send your own vocals through the sound system.

Features of the CLD-V820 include an eleven-step digital key controller, which will adjust the music to match the singer's voice; one-touch karaoke, which removes the lead vocals from most compact discs and music videos; and multiplex balance control, which adjusts or removes the lead vocal from any multiplex disc without disturbing the instrumental track.

On top of this assortment of capabilities, all Pioneer Laser Entertainment's Laser Karaoke players have been equipped with digital signal processing (DSP). DSP gives the CLD-V820 extensive control over the sounds that it produces, including three surround sound modes and four vocal effects. With DSP you can adjust your voice to a level that your friends will surely be able to tolerate — maybe even enjoy.

Pioneer Karaoke puts you on your home theater stage.

The surround settings include: hall, which lengthens both the echo and reverberation; stage, which emphasizes direct sounds and suppresses reverberation; and arena, which lengthens echoes and shortens reverb sounds.

The vocal settings enhance the sounds even further, and can be tailored according to your musical tastes. They include: pop, which emphasizes high frequencies and shortens the amount of echo; jazz, which emphasizes the low frequency and lengthens the amount of echo; ballad, which features short delay times and subdued echoes; and a chorus function, which adds high vocal sounds of 1/8th and 1/4th pitch to your own, thus creating the effect of more than one person singing.

The true beauty of this multi-function unit, however, is that you get a dual side LaserDisc player, a compact disc player and a full-featured Laser Karaoke machine all for around $1000. Karaoke software is priced reasonably with a suggested retail price of $20 per disc.

The CLD-V820 can provide hours upon hours of entertainment and can turn virtually any viewing room into a home concert hall — and any singer into a star.

home theater

LaserDiscs: The Ultimate A/V

How do you obtain the most entertainment from your home theater? Without the unrivaled picture quality, digital sound and theatrical effects of the LaserDisc format, even the highest tech audio/video system falls short of the true home theater experience.



Pioneer LaserDiscs provide home theater owners with the ultimate catalog of programming for their home enjoyment, offering the latest movie releases and the top music artists in concert or in original music video productions — with digital quality sound, the highest video resolution possible and theater-like Dolby surround sound effects. LaserDisc provides movie lovers with never-before-available classics, children's programming, celebrity showcases and new movie releases totalling nearly 6,500 LaserDisc titles.

The long list of Grammy-nominated musical artists whose work is currently available through Pioneer Artists LaserDisc is one indication of the variety and popularity of this digital audio/high resolution video format. In fact, videos by several Grammy nominees such as Madonna's "Blond Ambition World Tour Live," Michael Kamen's "Concerto For Saxophone" and the "Gipsy Kings: World Tour" are available exclusively on Pioneer Artists LaserDisc release and cannot be purchased or rented on videotape. Other Grammy luminaries available for LaserDisc home theater enjoyment include Sinead O'Connor's "Year of the Horse," Whitney Houston's "Welcome Home Heroes," "Wilson Phillips," Jesus Jones' "Big in Alaska," and Chick Corea's "Akoustic Band Live." These music video discs deliver the full fidelity and dynamics of a compact disc along with original video and live concert performances — all at an affordable price of under $30 per disc.

No format delivers the impact of audio and video as effectively as LaserDisc.

Movie lovers must also own Hollywood's biggest special effects extravaganza "Terminator 2: Judgment Day (T2)" on LaserDisc. Aside from the unique experience of viewing such a technical achievement on screen, viewers are also treated to a choice of pan and scan or wide-screen versions of the Arnold Schwarzenegger sequel. And a special limited edition box set offers a behind-the-scenes look at the making of "T2," as well as the actual feature film in the wide-screen CAV format. *(See the review in March VIDEO Magazine.)*

These are just a few examples of the home theatrical excitement that awaits the LaserDisc collector. They prove that any movie or music program worth keeping ought to be owned on LaserDisc. Because LaserDiscs do not deteriorate after multiple plays like videotape, the production remains as impressive as the first time you watched it. Without LaserDisc programming, even the most advanced home theater set-up is nothing more than a stereo TV.

Pioneer's "What Is Home Theater?" Contest

Grand Prize *Pioneer SD-P5053 Projection TV. $3900 value!*



Plus 200 VIDEO Magazine T-shirts (approximate retail value of T-shirts $5 each)

Here's How To Enter: Define what the term "home theater" means to you in 25 words or less and enter. Send your definition on a separate sheet of paper, along with your name and address, attach it to an original copy of this entry form and send to: **Pioneer Home Theater Contest,** c/o VIDEO Magazine, 460 West 34th St., New York, New York, 10001

Contest Rules: Contest winners will be selected by judges from VIDEO Magazine and Pioneer Electronics based on creativity and originality. All entries must be received no later than April 30, 1992. Not responsible for late, lost or misdirected mail. Limited one entry and one prize per household. Employees of VIDEO Magazine or any division of Pioneer or their immediate families, affiliates or agencies are not eligible to enter this contest. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. Contest only open to residents of the U.S., age 18 or older. All prizes will be awarded, no transfers, substitutes or cash equivalents of prizes are allowed, all taxes on prizes are the responsibility of the winners. By entering the contest, each entrant accepts and agrees to be bound by these rules; and the decision of the judges will be final. Winners will be notified by mail and required to sign an affidavit of eligibility, which must be completed and returned within 15 days of notification or prize will be forfeited and awarded to an alternate winner.

Q&A

BY RODERICK WOODCOCK

Sony editing cables, Canon pro camcorders and smart modulators

Q I have a Sony SLV-R5 S-VHS VCR, a CCD-V99 Hi8 camcorder and an RM-E100 edit controller. Unfortunately, the cable that connects the controller to the camcorder has a five-pin LANC connector that won't work with the V99, which has the smaller submini LANC plug. Is an adapter available, and where can I get it?

Bernie Applebaum
Castle Dale, Utah

A Newer models of the RM-E100 have cables that overcome this problem, but there is an adapter for older models. Sony lists it as a part, not an accessory. The order number is 1-574-228-11 (VK-810). It's a six-inch adapter with a female five-pin socket on one end and a male submini stereo plug on the other. A Sony service center can order it for you. It should cost less than $25.

Q Is the Sony CCD-TR81 Hi8 camcorder adaptable to the underwater housing used for the CCD-TR4 and CCD-TR7? If not, is another compact housing available?

Robert Howard
Hampton, Virginia

A Sony has a new housing available that works with both the TR81 and the CCD-TR51. It's called SPK-TRX Sports Pack. It resists rain, dust, splashing and sand, but is not waterproof.

Q I was all set to buy a Canon L1 Hi8 camcorder when I became aware of a newer model called the LX-100, which appears identical except for its black case. Are there any other differences between these two models?

Elliot Simpson
Van Nuys, California

A A Canon spokesman says the two models are functionally identical, although the LX-100 is sold by dealers for the professional market, and the L1 is sold through consumer retailers. Pro users prefer the LX-100's discreet black color, which is less obtrusive than the white L1, especially when videotaping surreptitiously. The LX-100 also has a rubber seal around the cassette door to protect the tape transport from dust and moisture, and a reinforced grip and leather strap. Due to the more stringent quality control tests the LX-100 must pass, and because pro gear is seldom discounted heavily, you'll likely find it selling at a higher price.

Q I play tapes made with my 8mm camcorder through the audio/video inputs of my Mitsubishi VHS VCR. This makes it easy to dub and edit their contents, so that I can reuse the tapes. Normal playback appears fine, but when I activate the search mode, the picture gets very dark. Comments, please.

Bart Flemming
San Diego, California

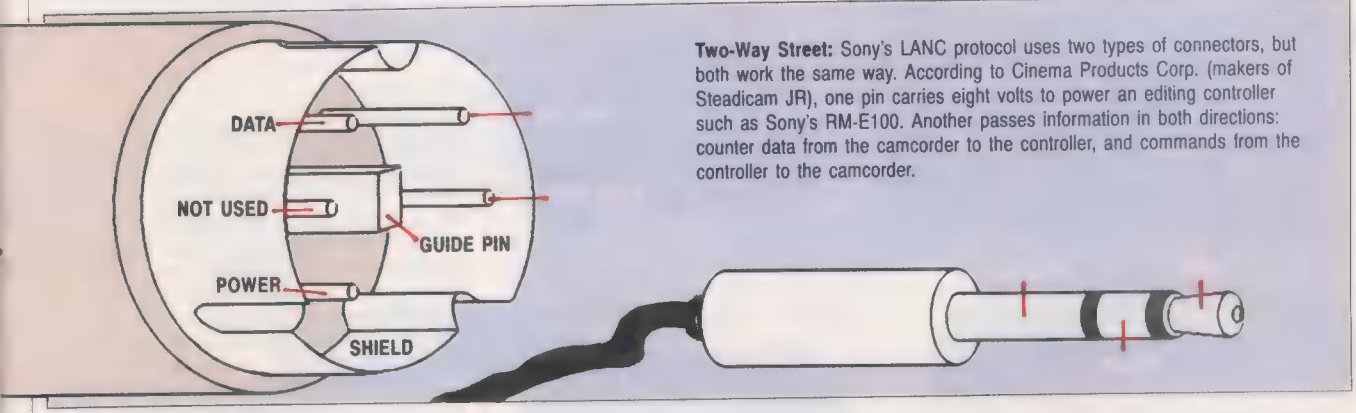
A Convenient as your arrangement may be for dubbing, it's not the best for casual viewing. The 8mm signal is causing the video gain control circuit of the VHS deck to cut the signal level, darkening the picture. Some readers with two VHS decks wired together this way have also reported this problem on cassettes from the first deck, especially prerecorded tapes encrypted with Macrovision.

The solution is to rewire. Use an A/B switch that allows either your 8mm or VHS deck to play directly into your TV set. Or use an audio/video switcher, like Sony's SV-B3, which offers several inputs. To use an A/V switcher, your TV set must have A/V inputs.

Q I recently read an article that referred to a smart RF modulator. What makes it different from others?

George Brown
New York, New York

A Smart RF modulators are supplied with some camcorders these days, especially 8mm models which are often used as players. They combine an RF modulator with an automatic A/B switch, and are wired between the camcorder and VHF input on the TV (or VCR). When power is applied to the camcorder, the A/B switch automatically switches in the camcorder signal. When camcorder power is cut, it restores the TV signal. This way, you don't get a screen full of snow if you forget to switch the input. ■



Two-Way Street: Sony's LANC protocol uses two types of connectors, but both work the same way. According to Cinema Products Corp. (makers of Steadicam JR), one pin carries eight volts to power an editing controller such as Sony's RM-E100. Another passes information in both directions: counter data from the camcorder to the controller, and commands from the controller to the camcorder.

Video Magazine welcomes your questions. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. All letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address queries to Q & A, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

N·E·W PRODUCTS

BY STAN PINKWAS

In the wake of CES, a surge of snazzy gear & promising prototypes.

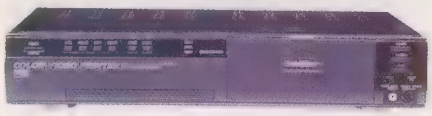
The Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, which closed as our March issue went to press, left us with more exciting products than tight deadlines permitted. Below are 10 new products and prototypes previewed at the show. Notable also among the displays were several upgrades and variations on already familiar products.

Sharp, for example, showed a new version of its LCD projector with extra reach in the zoom lens and 2.5 times as many pixels as current models. Technics introduced a second-generation THX system that the company says is designed for self-installation. And SkyPix announced it will launch its widely anticipated, but delayed home satellite service in April. Its receiver and a three-foot home dish will cost about $850.

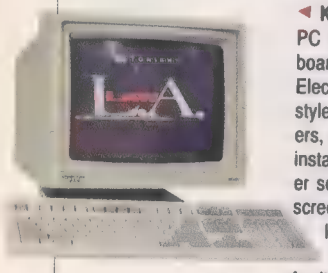




INTERACTIVE PORTABLES
Prototypes for a trio of small CD-Interactive players, all with bright LCD screens, provide a glimpse into the near future of the newest video medium. Philips, which only recently fielded the first CD-I player, showed a sleek portable (above), while Sanyo displayed a pair of prototypes—one, with an optional mouse, for adults (below) and a bright red model (left), with an electronic sketch pad, for kids. On the software side, Philips launched two dozen new titles, including CD-I versions of *Battleship* and *Sargon Chess,* adventure games called *Dark Castle* and *Escape From CyberCity,* and a guitar instructional. Philips also said CD-I players will include extra functions for Photo CD users when Kodak releases its new format later this year.



▲ **PRINTS CHARMING**
Goldstar adds the GCP-B600 to the small, but growing cadre of video printers. Goldstar's model, available this summer for $999, includes S-video jacks and multiframe and multiprint features.



◄ **KEYBOARD VIDEO**
PC Vision, an add-on board by 50/50 Micro Electronics for IBM-style personal computers, allows a user to instantly turn a computer screen into a TV screen and use the keyboard to control TV settings. Look for it this summer at a suggested price of $395.





▲ SHAPE OF SCREENS TO COME
RCA's first widescreen TV set, with a 34-inch diagonal, will be introduced later in the year, along with a second model bearing the company's Pro-Scan brand. The sets' 16:9 aspect ratio will let them play letterboxed tapes and discs without displaying any black bands. For purposes of comparison, RCA showed a 16:9 tube in this featureless, mock-up cabinet next to a conventional 4:3 set.

▼ SCREEN GENIE
The Fox 800 multi-system remote control, for $99, uses a large touch-sensitive panel to control functions otherwise requiring up to eight conventional remotes. It comes programmed with infrared codes for virtually all available components.



DIAL P FOR PROGRAM
Panasonic's PV-S4280 S-VHS VCR includes a range of editing features as well as two jog/shuttle dials and two remote controls—a conventional one and the company's Program Director, which sets the timer through a series of dials. ▶



◀ DRUM ROLL
Optonica's VC-G975U VHS VCR includes center tape loading, an elaborate onscreen instruction manual and a unique new tweak—a titanium-coated head drum, which the company says enhances playback while reducing wear and tear.

SETTINGS BY DESIGN
Mitsubishi's HS-CX4 VHS-C camcorder is one of a trio of compact models marking the company's return to the U.S. camcorder market. Emphasizing easy use, the CX4 features six built-in settings for frequently encountered shooting activities, like sunsets and sporting events. The Auto Event Positions automatically optimize color, exposure, focus and shutter speed as needed. The "Ski" setting, for example, adjusts the backlight compensation to accommodate subjects silhouetted against snowfields. ▶



CD-I, RCA PHOTOS: LARRY KAPLAN

Private Listening

New INFRASOUND IR500 Cordless Headset lets you listen privately to TV, as loud as you like, without disturbing others.



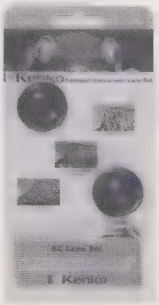
IR500

AC-powered transmitter connects easily to any brand of TV, VCR, or TV video game. Lightweight, battery-powered headset provides maximum listening comfort. Built in volume control lets you adjust volume from headset without getting up. Additional headsets may be purchased separately. UL Listed. Limited one year warranty.

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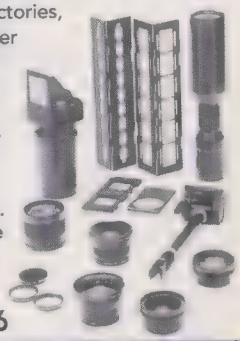
IMPROVE YOUR IMAGES



Kenko introduces the NEW KC-SET for compact video cameras. This two lens set has a .5X wide-angle and a 1.5X telephoto lens to capture all the action indoors and outdoors. Comes complete with storage bags and lens caps.

Our new video filters will protect and enhance the images you shoot.

With video lens supports, transfer units and assorted accessories, Kenko is the only name you'll ever need. For the highest quality video lenses, filters and accessories straight from the Kenko factories, ask your local dealer to show you the Kenko product line or write to Kenko for a dealer near you.



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Circle 51 on Reader Service Card.

BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH



EYES ON TESTS

SHOWDO

The cathode-ray tube—the device that gave birth to video—is still going strong as it nears its 90th birthday. Upstart technologies like LCD have gone head-to-head with the venerable tube, and have been trounced every time. Meanwhile, tubes just keep getting better. The best examples of tube technology can be seen in the recent crop of 35-inch sets packed with the latest picture-enhancing circuitry. These new tubes are the biggest consumers can buy, and are proving extremely popular, according to manufacturers. But are they the best? Only a showdown of 35-inch TV sets could tell us for sure.

We asked four leaders in 35-inch monitors—JVC, Mitsubishi, RCA and Toshiba—to send us their top sets. Then we put them through a grueling course: a series of test patterns plus a batch of laserdiscs hand-picked to stress the sets to the max. Our test panelists found big differences in performance, and came to some surprising conclusions about the product category as a whole.

Our showdown of the monster monitors included JVC's $2,899 AV-3591S, Mitsubishi's $2,899 CS-3535R, Toshiba's $2,699 CF3566A and two from Thomson: the $2,349 RCA F35100ST and the $2,499 ProScan PS35150. We hooked them up to a JVC JS-X900 switcher and a Pioneer LD-S2 laserdisc player with Monster Cable S-video cables. We also connected a test signal generator for technical analysis.



Tops for Tweaking: Thomson's ProScan PS35150 offers a seven-band, onscreen graphic equalizer.

Our panelists were managing editor Stan Pinkwas, technical editor Lancelot Braithwaite, senior editor Kenneth Korman, contributing editors Stewart Wolpin, Steve Daly and Ron Goldberg, and myself.

THE SETUP

We initially compared the big monitors using the settings made at the factory. After viewing all the sets this way, panelists were allowed to adjust them as they saw fit. Some panelists spent several hours experimenting with different picture settings on a variety of software.

The panelists used the movies to judge subjective aspects of performance: sharpness (or detail), contrast, shadow detail, color accuracy and snowiness. We used our standard test scale of one to five, with one representing poor and five representing excellent, and allowed panelists to give half-points.

To evaluate picture quality from a technical standpoint, we used a test signal generator. The first test pattern was a red field, which revealed problems in color constancy and color shift. Color constancy, technically expressed as low chroma AM noise, is a set's ability to produce consistent shades with no dim or bright spots. Sets with low color shift, or low chroma PM noise, produce cor-



Screen Test: From left, panelists Brent Butterworth, Lancelot Braithwaite and Steve Daly evaluate 35-inch TV sets from Mitsubishi, RCA, JVC, ProScan and Toshiba.

WN

Five 35-inch monster monitors square off in a battle of sight and sound.

rect tones—red fields don't turn purple or orange.

The next pattern, dothatch, displays a grid of white lines on ■ black field, with dots in the center of each square. This allowed the panelists to detect geometric distortion, which is an unnatural bowing or bending of the video image. It also tests the focus in the corners of the screen (a traditional problem for big-screen sets) and the alignment of the red, green and blue components of a picture, which is called convergence.



Convenient Connections: The jack panel on Mitsubishi's CS-3535R flips up for easy access.

SMPTE color bars, the third pattern, showed each set's propensity to produce dot crawl on vertical edges and hanging dots on horizontals.

Last, the panelists gave each set a subjective rating based simply on how much they liked the picture of each set, regardless of its technical merits.

We also tested audio, using music and movie discs. We examined each set's ability to reproduce dialog both clearly and naturally; to pump out powerful, well-defined bass; to create a broad, realistic soundstage that ties audio cues to the video image correctly; and to produce pleasing sound from music tracks.

SHOWDOWN SURVIVORS

Although even on first glance, the differences between the sets were large, it took the panelists a long time to select their favorites. They felt that all the sets performed acceptably, but that all had significant faults. Four of the five sets were picked as the subjective favorite by at least one panelist.

And despite the efforts manufacturers have put into improving the sound on big-screen sets, none of the panelists considered these sets' sound systems adequate for demanding program material, such as movies and music video. "The sound lags far behind the pictures," one panelist commented. "The manufacturers should improve the audio or de-emphasize it as a feature."

In picture quality, Toshiba's CF3566A emerged as the favorite. The panelists found that its cool, bluish picture edged out the others in every subjective category. They especially liked its dense blacks, accurate fleshtones and its performance on *Arsenic & Old Lace* (Voyager/Criterion), a black-and-white movie. The set also scored solid marks in the technical evaluation, especially on the red field.

However, panelists found two faults in the Toshiba. First, its sound system averaged only 1.8 in our ratings, a last-place finish. It produced a harsh sound on symphonic and rock music discs, and gave dialog a strained, unnatural tone. Its digital surround processing modes (theater, hall, club and stadium) couldn't overcome the limitations of the speakers. Second, its complicated, unintuitive menu system was the only one the panelists had trouble with.

The ProScan PS35150 scored second in the overall subjective picture rating. The panelists rated it lower than the

GROUP PHOTO: BOB FORREST

SHOWDOWN

Showdown Score Card

	JVC	MITSUBISHI	PROSCAN	RCA	TOSHIBA
SHARPNESS	2.8	2.9	3.7	3.5	4.3
CONTRAST	3.0	3.1	3.5	3.5	4.1
SHADOW DETAIL	2.6	3.3	3.8	3.8	4.0
COLOR ACCURACY	3.2	3.3	3.3	2.7	4.1
SNOWINESS	3.4	3.8	3.5	3.1	4.1
COLOR SHIFT	3.8	3.0	3.2	2.6	3.9
COLOR CONSTANCY	4.1	3.3	3.3	2.8	4.4
DISTORTION	3.7	3.2	3.3	2.7	3.4
CONVERGENCE	4.4	3.0	3.3	2.7	3.4
CORNER FOCUS	4.1	4.0	3.0	3.1	3.2
HANGING DOTS	2.6	4.9	3.7	1.3	3.4
DOT CRAWL	2.7	4.9	3.6	1.3	3.6
AVERAGE	3.4	3.6	3.4	2.8	3.8
SUBJECTIVE IMPRESSION	2.8	3.0	3.3	2.6	4.1

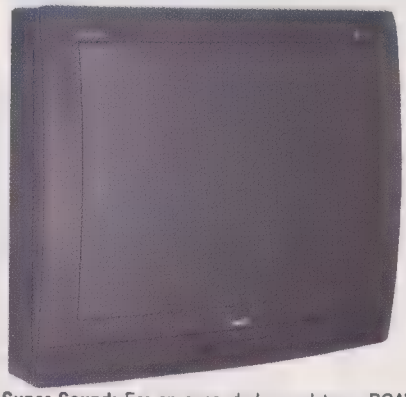


Surround Selections: Toshiba's CF3566A features four digital surround processing (DSP) modes.

Toshiba from a technical standpoint, but some found its warm color more pleasing than that of the Toshiba. "The ProScan doesn't work so well on colorful movies like *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* [Warner]," one said, "but overall, its color balance is the best compromise." Another dissented: "The picture is too warm. It looks sepia-toned."

The panelists loved the set's digital zoom feature, which lets the viewer get a close-up of any area of the screen. The set's main fault was a tendency to produce a yellowish hue, or doming effect, during long scenes with bright whites or intense daylight. This was surprising because the set's Invar shadow mask should have prevented such effects.

The ProScan's sound ranked among the best in our showdown, averaging 2.9. It produced very clear dialog and impressive bass, although the panelists judged its maximum volume level too low for large rooms. The set offers two nice audio features: surround speaker outputs and a seven-band onscreen graphic equalizer.



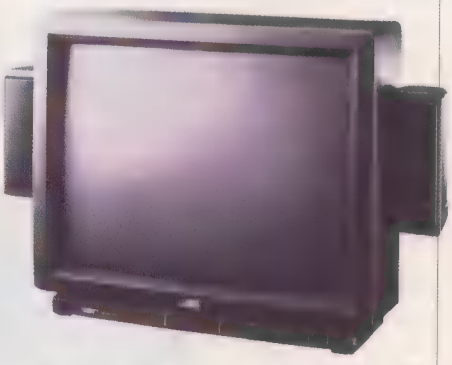
Super Sound: For an expanded soundstage, RCA's F35100ST uses Hughes' Sound Retrieval System.

Mitsubishi's CS-3535R earned the second best average picture rating, although it was the only set no panelist picked as a favorite. The set revealed its extensive processing circuitry when we put up the color bars—lines between the bars were virtually free of dot crawl and hanging dots.

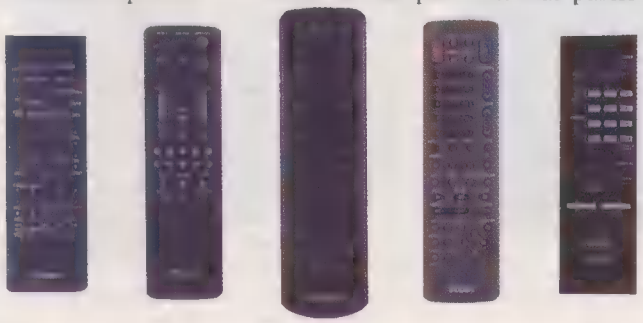
None of the panelists was particularly fond of the Mitsubishi's soft, cool picture, but none passionately disliked it. "It looks completely realistic on some discs, pale and lifeless on others," one observed. They found its switchable video noise reduction a bit too effective: It eliminated noise, but cut sharpness significantly. "It might be ideal for those with bad cable service," one panelist commented. It was the only set that produced significant levels of flagging (image bending at the top of the screen) on videotape encoded with Macrovision.

The panelists faulted its speakers for tinny sound—it earned only a 2.3 average in the audio ratings. A few adjustments to the set's five-band graphic equalizer helped a bit. The Mitsubishi has two features the panelists loved—a remote that lights up at the touch of a button, and a jack panel that flips to face upward so the user can attach ca-

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Dialog Done Right: JVC's AV-3591S has a Dolby Three-Channel Logic decoder and a center speaker.



Control Collection: From left, remote controls from the Toshiba, ProScan, Mitsubishi, RCA and JVC sets.

REMOTES: BOB FORREST

BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH

SPECIAL VIDEO CONTEST

ART OF THE WIN

Want to ace our third annual home video contest? Past prize-winners share their secrets.



Keep It Simple: Tom Donohue uses advanced gear but relies on editing technique, not technology.

In our two previous Video Magazine/Scotch Videocassette contests, we've seen videotapes that rival the technical mastery of network broadcasts—videos shot using $20,000 Betacams with flying, computer-animated titles and dazzling digital effects. But all too often, they lack the creative spark of more home-grown efforts.

Usually, the videos that catch our attention—and win our contest—are produced on inexpensive equipment. Many have handwritten titles and lack special effects. You see, winning our contest—and a share of nearly $10,000 in video components and programs of your choice—doesn't take a great deal of equipment or formal training. As 1991 Grand Prize winner Steve Ballot puts it, "*Heaven's Gate* and *Hudson Hawk* cost millions of dollars to make, yet they're almost unbearable to watch."

More than anything else, producing great home videos takes imagination. To show you how to turn your imagination into a contest-winning video, we'll explain the editing and shooting secrets that made the tapes by our past Grand Prize winners so entertaining. And we'll show you how to turn your camcorder classics into contest contenders using equipment you probably already own.

The Grand Prize is $5,000 worth of video and audio equipment. There are two First Prizes, each $2,000 toward the purchase of a camcorder and related equipment. And there are also five Special Merit Awards, each $100 toward the purchase of prerecorded or blank tapes and discs. You've got nothing to lose—each entrant receives a free Scotch EXG ProCam VHS videocassette!

As a high school audio/video instructor, 1990 Grand Prize winner Tom Donohue has access to plenty of professional equipment. But he feels he could have edited his video with almost any VCR. "I had special effects," he explains, "but I wanted to stick with simple, cuts-only editing."

Our favorite aspect of Donohue's *1990 Honeymoon Tour*, which chronicled a cross-country car trip, is the way he blended in background music that fit the subject matter, such as King Crimson's industrial-sounding "20th Century Schizoid Man" for a tour through a bizarre metal sculpture garden. Donohue's collection of more than 5,000 records gives him a wide selection of backing tracks. "I laid down the music first," he explains, "and marked which counter and frame numbers fell on the beat, then inserted the video at those points. Usually, I had to try each cut two or three times to get it right."

Donohue's work shows his enthusiasm for—and skill with—the camcorder. He got the ideas for many of his

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Back to Basics: Steven Ballot shot his winning video with an old tube camera and a $20 tripod.

MAHDAVIAN

HIGH-TECH

Can karaoke conquer America? With built-in





Karaoke Portables: JVC's KX-G1 (above) and Sanyo's prototype player for kids (right) play CD+G discs, which show lyrics and graphics on TV screens.



Party Animal: Pioneer's top-of-the-line CLK-V920 laser karaoke player lets singers remove lead vocals from most CDs, adjust the music key to match their own voices and add an echo effect to video karaoke discs, which come packaged in laserdisc and CD+G formats (right, from Nikkodo).



Robbyn, a thirtysomething white-collar professional, is a typical karaoke beginner. Nervous, hesitant about her debut, she approached the microphone that would connect her to a laserdisc karaoke player, then broadcast her voice to the waiting crowd. Bending slightly, Robbyn squinted as the lyrics appeared on the TV screen and began to sing. But the melody proved elusive, and Robbyn half sang, half spoke the lyrics to "You Light Up My Life" slightly before they were highlighted, a common karaoke mistake that put Robbyn two bars ahead of the instrumental. The karaoke-wise in her audience tried to help Robbyn catch up to the music. But their help only made things worse. Everyone else just laughed at her mistimed phrasing and off-key notes.

But it was all in good spirits, and Robbyn too was laughing with the rest of us by the time she finished. Best of all, Robbyn's debut launched *Video Magazine*'s karaoke party on a hilarious night's journey into lighthearted fun—plenty of willing, if reluctant, karaoke victims were waiting in the wings. By the time the evening was through, we had thoroughly party-tested not only karaoke's entertainment value as an American home video pastime, but two new, top-of-the-line laserdisc karaoke machines.

Karaoke (ka-ra-OK, with a rolling r on the middle syllable) is Japanese slang for empty orchestra. In Japan, it's virtually a national obsession. Private and public karaoke clubs—ranging in size from tiny, single rooms to lavish nightspots—are as common as pizza parlors are here. With a passion that defies American understanding, Japanese karaoke buffs love to reach for the mic to croon favorite songs while CDs or laserdiscs add the instrumentals.

Japanese companies have long believed Americans would also succumb to the pleasures of karaoke and have been carefully nurturing what is already a $590 million U.S. karaoke market, chiefly in bars and restaurants, according to the Karaoke International Industry Association. Our own sing-along heritage is somewhat different. But karaoke (which tends to be pronounced in the U.S. as carry-o-kee) isn't really about singing along. It's more like singing alone—except in public, which adds a certain tension to the experience.

Since the late '80s, Pioneer and Nikkodo have been selling laserdisc karaoke players to such bars and restaurants as Singalong in New York City and Santo's in Los Angeles. But in the past year, ka-

ROBO PHOTO: LARRY KAPLAN

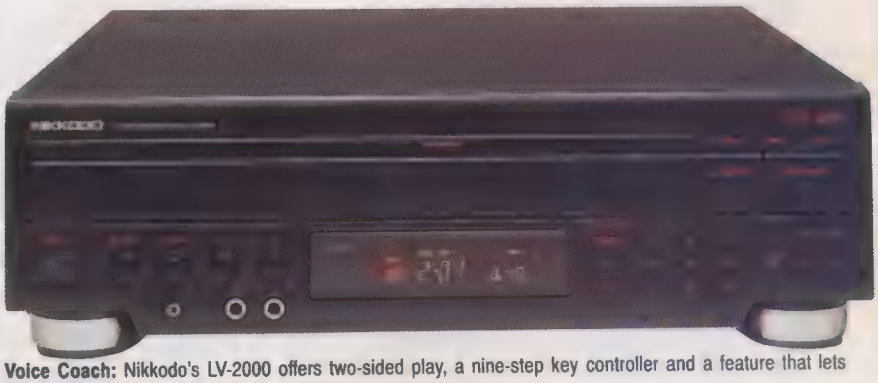
BY STEWART WOLPIN

HOOTENANNY

videos setting the mood, we party test the newest laser players.

raoke makers have been going directly to U.S. consumers through more than 700 retailers. In fact, consumers now have a choice of four formats: laserdisc, CD+Graphics, videotape and audio tape.

The limitation of tape-based karaoke is demonstrated in the film *When Harry Met Sally...* When Billy Crystal serenades Meg Ryan by singing "Surrey With the Fringe on Top," he has to read the lyrics from a printed booklet. In CD+G systems, Gordon MacRae wanna-bes read the lyrics off a TV screen, often accompanied by primitive digitized images. The new machines carry the concept to a logical technical conclusion. The lyrics, highlighted as they should be sung, play while a music video runs in the background. It's as natural as reading a teleprompter, and as invisible if the audience can't see the monitor.



Voice Coach: Nikkodo's LV-2000 offers two-sided play, a nine-step key controller and a feature that lets singers know it's searching for a selection.



Do-It-Yourself Chorus: Pioneer's CLD-V820 can add the sound of harmonic voices as well as remove most lead vocals.

What kind of equipment can you croon to? JVC, Nikkodo, Fleco, Lasonic and Lonestar all field CD+G karaoke systems. JVC, for example, is just introducing a CD+G player with speakers and a dedicated microphone, the KX-G1, for $700. Sanyo too has shown prototypes of CD+G players, including a brightly colored Robo entry for kids.

If, however, you choose the laser route, you get a combi player suitable also for laserdiscs and CDs. Pioneer makes three standard combi models, the CLD-V510 for $700, the CLD-V720 for $850 and the CLD-V820 for $1,000. It also offers the CLK-V920 for $1,900, which includes along with the laser player a two-way speaker system, an amplifier and an audio cassette deck for recording performances.

Nikkodo's lineup includes the $999 LV-100, the LV-2000 for $999 and the $1,800 LV-220A, which has an amp and also plays CD+G discs. Sanyo is entering the fray with its LV-P500U laserdisc karaoke player for $799, and Denonet makes a combination laserdisc/CD+G

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BY STEWART WOLPIN

LIGHTS! ACTION! CAMERAMAN!

An innovative new accessory makes every shooter a video star.

HANDS ON TEST

The most loved and hated guest at many a party is the person working the camcorder. We're all happy you're preserving this special moment on videotape—thanks very much—but: Would you please get that stupid camera out of my face? Or quit chasing your cute, but camera-shy niece? Or can you fast forward through the long shots of the floor, the shaky handheld tracking scenes, the badly framed parts with muffled audio?

Of course, the person behind the lens may not be happy either. Sore-armed from bracing the camcorder, blurry-eyed from squinting through the viewfinder, disappointed because your own image appears not once during the hours you've sacrificed to capture the fun everyone else was having, you may wonder why you bothered. The only evidence you even attended the party is your mumbled comments on the soundtrack.

If this is you, even only once in a while, it's time to step out from the shadows and become the star of your own videos. A clever new accessory with the slightly sexist moniker CameraMan can solve the awkward dilemma of shooting an event while trying to share in it at the same time. CameraMan is to home video what the Walkman is to the audio cassette: It completes the promise implicit in camcorders by freeing shooters from the obligation to shoulder them, and transforms video drudgery into video fun.

CameraMan can do virtually everything a videographer can do only, in many cases, better. It consists of a sturdy, black, 15-pound base about the size of a jewelry box that supports virtually any camcorder weighing less than 10 pounds, and a 10-inch-high control wand. Using robotic servo-mechanisms, two-way radio communications between base and wand, and more than a dozen patent-pending technologies, the base will fluidly swivel and/or tilt up and down to keep the camcorder accurately focused on whatever the wandering wand instructs it to.

And tracking remote objects, or subjects like yourself, is just the start. The wand is also a two-channel VHF wireless microphone that transmits clear monaural conversation more than 100 feet. With an optional Camera Control-



Full-Tilt Boogie: The CameraMan, shown in profile, can tilt a camcorder through a 50-degree arc.

ler, the wand also learns and converts such infrared camcorder controls as zoom, record, pause and fade (for two different camcorders) into RF control instructions.

You can also override automatic tracking to manually control the degree

Fast And Flexible

The CameraMan is designed to work intuitively, but its actual response times bear out subjective impressions. Operational ease is excellent after a little practice, while audio characteristics are good for voice, but poor for music (for which it is not chiefly intended). Below are our results:

Pan Speed: 4.25 seconds to 5.5 minutes for full 360-degree range; 58.5-sec. speed when first turned on; 20 steps

Tilt Speed: 3 secs. to 6 min. for 50-degree range; 28-sec. speed when first turned on; 20 steps

Operating Range: More than 85 feet for auto tracking and control; more than 115 feet for audio

Audio Frequency Response: 300 Hz to 6.5 kHz at -3 dB

Linear Audio S/N: 68.3 dB; **Audio Distortion:** 0.8%

—Lancelot Braithwaite





Star Maker: The CameraMan consists of a motorized camcorder cradle that pans and tilts, plus a 10-inch-high remote wand—with a built-in wireless microphone—that controls lens functions and movement.

of swivel (a full 360 degrees) and tilt (up to 50 degrees), and the speed of pan shots (see "Fast And Flexible"). You can program the CameraMan to automatically pan, tilt and zoom for up to four different shots. You can further smooth camera movement with a two-way "action/drama" switch that adjusts the unit's sensitivity to wand movement. There's also a "stealth" mode that keeps CameraMan tracking when you walk behind an obstacle.

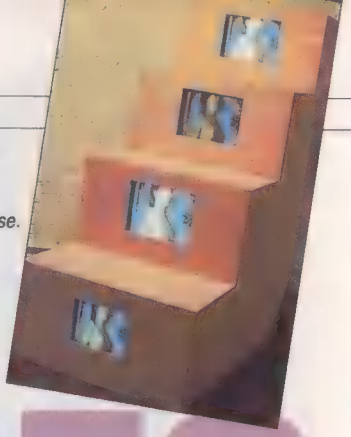
Forgive the hyperbole, but the execution of CameraMan's design is startling; if anything, it's lovingly overengineered. Moreover, despite dozens of control options, it's wonderfully simple to set up, thanks to a *Five Minutes to Action* illustrated brochure. The base can rest on any flat surface—floor, table, chair, bookshelf—or on a heavy-duty tripod. An internal lead acid battery in the base supplies power for up to three hours, and recharges when plugged into a wall outlet. The wand, which operates on two nine-volt batteries, has a stiff, sliding hatch that protects the controls from little pitchers with curious fingers, and opens in segments to reveal only those controls you need or want.

None of the claims by ParkerVision, the company that makes CameraMan, are frivolous. (Although new to video, ParkerVision is well-known for advanced control systems in the industrial heating and cooling business.) CameraMan reacts faster and surer than any human operator to the wand's movement. The pans are picture-perfect and free of jitter. In fact, CameraMan works amazingly well both technically and from a psychological standpoint. CameraMan makes the camcorder unobtrusive. And don't bogart that wand, man: Eventually everyone wants to be on TV.

Talk about a device powered by imagination. Unfettered family or group videography is the most obvious application. Used by a speaker or a moderator at a lecture or discussion, CameraMan can create an instant instructional video. Program the settings to pan automatically from pitcher to batter to

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PHOTOGRAPHS: LES MORSILLO



Stairway to Heaven: Shigeto Kubota's *Duchampiana: Nude Descending a Staircase.*

What has 24 TVs and no commercials? Daring video installations, mixing tape and technology, are finding new fans among video buffs and museums.

VIDEO





Behind the Curve: Mary Lucier's seven-monitor *Ohio at Giverney* (above) with floral video detail (top).

Two dozen TV sets and a pair of radios are arrayed in a giant W-shaped formation many yards wide. The center of the W is an arch big enough for people to walk through. The TV sets consist of vintage cabinets fitted with new color monitors, which display two videotapes from two VCRs in the structure.

● A small monitor rests inside a glass jar filled with exposed electronic parts. A power cord extends from the jar to a standard electrical outlet, activating the monitor which displays the face of a chimpanzee, apparently in pain.

● A pair of small monitors are bolted onto both ends of a long length of black pipe which teeters atop a triangular stand. A video camera mounted at the center of the pipe feeds images of anyone watching the structure to the monitors at either end.

These three works of art—*Connections With Wings* by Nam June Paik, *Animal Research II* by Alan Rath and *Video See-Saw* by Buky Schwartz—are examples of an art form that has grown up side by side with the home video industry, in a sort of parallel universe populated by avant-garde artists. Although some installations, as the form is known, look like the work of pranksters, without them our cultural landscape would be different. Artists as diverse as the Talking Heads and choreographer Merce Cunningham have applied the innovative techniques pioneered in video installations. In fact, without it there would probably be no MTV as we know it.

Yet despite the influence video installations have had on other artists, they are only now beginning to reach a wider audience, thanks in large part to their growing exposure in museums and art galleries. Today, video installations are represented in nearly every museum in the U.S. that exhibits contemporary art. On the open market, some works have been acquired for more than $100,000.

Combining video equipment, original programs, sculpture and architecture, these installations transform flat electronic images into multidimensional experiences, rich in texture and mood. They also represent daring adventures by a community of artists who frequently work in other media. Yet, except for Nam June Paik, such artists as Rath, Schwartz, Mary Lucier, Bill Viola, Shigeto Kubota, Dara Birnbaum, Joan Jonas, Peter D'Agostino and Bruce Nauman are little known outside artistic circles.

Video installation artists are still a rare breed, humanist techies working with perhaps the costliest art materials

BY STEVE DITLEA

NOUVEAU

around, at the exact spot where art and technology intersect. Grants from museums and government art agencies subsidize a limited number of works. But for the most part, video installation artists have relied on their own ingenuity and resources to overcome obstacles. In the process, they have amassed a significant body of work that illuminates with irony and whimsy basic assumptions about our television-shaped lives.

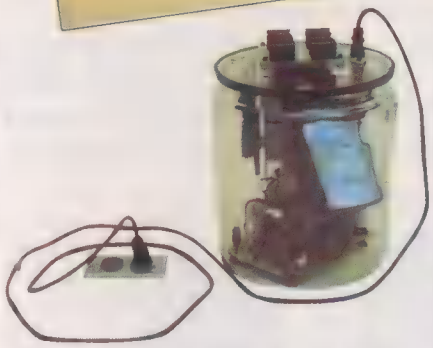
Video installations should not be confused with what is known as "video art" or "single-channel" videos, which are independently produced, artistically inspired programs appreciated for their content. Video art can be shown anywhere—or broadcast, as on *Alive From Off Center*, a program of the Public Broadcasting System. In video installations, the program is part of a hardware construct that typically includes modified monitors, mechanized components, sculptural objects or architectural details. Video art can be duplicated; a video installation is often one of a kind.

Few art forms can trace their origins to a specific moment or event, but video installation can be tracked back to the *Exposition of Music-Electronic Television*, a 1963 exhibition at the Galerie Parnas in the German town of Wuppertal, where the Korean-born Paik first exhibited "prepared televisions"—sets modified to produce unexpected displays.

According to John Hanhardt, curator for film and video at New York City's Whitney Museum, who witnessed the historic scene, the sets were randomly distributed around the gallery. The scanning mechanisms in some of the sets were magnetically manipulated, affecting the broadcast images. The TV cabinets were marked up and cluttered with bottles and objects, while chairs were scattered about. In the process, wrote Hanhardt, "Paik changed our perception of television as a cultural form."

The short list of video installation's leading artists still includes Paik. The Godfather of the medium, he is credited with creating the first video synthesizer in 1973 and with pioneering many innovative techniques, including colorizing and quick-cut editing. "He certainly in-



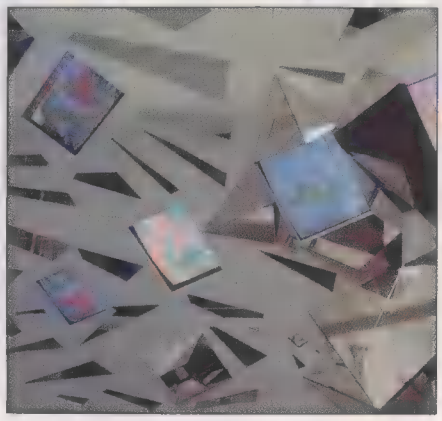


Body Parts: Alan Rath's *Wave* (top) and *Animal Research II* (above) use cathode ray tubes, circuitry, metals and glass to create provocative electronic sculptures.



Outdoor Drama: Dara Birnbaum's *Rio Vidwall* (left), a controversial open-air installation for an Atlanta shopping mall.





Married With Sculptures: Nam June Paik's *Egg Grows* (above), which uses eight monitors, and a detail from Shigeto Kubota's *Niagara Falls* (right).

WHERE TO SEE INSTALLATIONS

Video installations are exhibited less frequently than other forms of art, so the best way to follow them is to check local gallery and museum listings. The following sites have installations on display or on the way.

- *Donald Young Gallery*, 2107 Third Avenue, Seattle. Installations by Gary Hill and Bill Viola, through March; one-man show by Bill Viola, April. Information: 415-448-9484.
- *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art*, 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco. "Passage de L'Image," group show with works by Bill Viola, Michael Snow, Marcel Odenbach, Chris Marker, Thierry Kuntzel and others, through April 12. Information: 415-863-8800.
- *New Museum*, 583 Broadway, New York City. "Age Machine," installation by Nancy Burson with David Kramlisch, through April 19. Information: 212-219-1355.
- *Whitney Museum of American Art*, 945 Madison Avenue, New York City. "Terry Berkowitz" video installation, May 27-July 5. Information: 212-570-3656.
- *Wexner Center for the Arts*, North High Street and 15th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio. "A SIMPLE STORY/ Juarez," installation by Terry Allen, April-August. Information: 614-292-0330.

fluenced MTV," says Barbara London, video curator at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Paik, who has just turned 60, is now in a classical phase, recapping previous themes on a monumental scale. "Some of his latest pieces use hundreds of TV sets," says Bob Riley, media arts curator at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Paik travels widely in Germany, Japan and the U.S., teaching, lecturing and continuing to expand the video universe. Other video installation artists to keep an eye out for include:

- *Shigeto Kubota.* The distaff half of video's first family, the Japan-born Kubota has been married to Paik since 1977. With a background in sculpture and painting, Kubota has produced some of the most colorful and playful video installations. She is known both for single-channel videos and video installations, like *Duchampiana: Nude Descending a Staircase* (1976). This witty homage to French avant-garde artist Marcel Duchamp consists of a plywood staircase with monitors embedded in each step. The monitors play a video of a descending nude, recalling Duchamp's once-shocking painting.

- *Alan Rath.* The most technologically savvy of video installation artists, Rath builds electronic sculptures from scratch, designing his own circuit boards and computer software. At the leading edge between artificial constructs and organic forms, Rath's installations often include hands and other anatomical images, controlled by computers, on video screens. Trained in electrical engineering, Rath is one of the few artists to use computers in video installations.

- *Mary Lucier.* Deterioration and death are key, but subtle themes in the video installations of Ohio-born, New York-based Lucier. For example, *Wilderness* consists of seven classical columns that support seven monitors playing a tape about civilization's encroachment on the natural environment. The permanent collection of the Whitney Museum includes her *Ohio at Giverney* (1983), an arching composition of seven monitors embedded in a curving wall. The monitors show rural landscapes in Ohio and in the provincial French gardens where 19th-century painter Claude Monet painted some of his most vivid impressionist masterpieces.

Lucier's installations often depict landscapes, although they shouldn't be taken literally. "Landscapes are a metaphor for states of mind, for patterns of thought," Lucier explains. In a more recent work, *Mass* (1990), she used laserdiscs for the first time to devise a three-channel installation of projected video mixing the choreography of Elizabeth Streb with New York street scenes.

- *Bill Viola.* Landscapes of Earth and mind also characterize some of Viola's installations. Born in New York, he spans the globe for his work, visiting such far-flung locales as the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific, Ladekh in the Himalayas and Atsugi, Japan, where he was Sony's first artist-in-residence.

Viola's most spectacular installation, *Sanctuary* (1989), includes an indoor forest of living pine trees in which a small projection screen displays a tape of a woman giving birth. An earlier installation, *Room for St. John of the Cross* (1985), evokes the periods of meditation imposed on this 16th-century Spanish monk by using a projected video image of a mountain seen from a multimedia cell. "My travels have taught me there was always just one 'right place' where an idea can come to life," says Viola.

● *Dara Birnbaum.* Her massive work *Rio Vidwall* (1989), commissioned for an Atlanta shopping mall, was hailed as the first permanent outdoor video installation in the country. It also raised important questions for the medium. An assemblage of 25 27-inch monitors, *Rio Vidwall* was supposed to continuously screen Birnbaum's 15-minute videodisc of the landscape at the site of the mall before it was built, mixed with TV news images from a satellite hookup.

When the project was conceived, video walls, inspired in part by early video installations, were still new. But by the time *Rio Vidwall* was built, such walls were a common sight and the mall's developer wanted to run ads and other programs on it, raising familiar questions about the line between advertising and art.

Video installations frequently confront such issues by combining elements apparently at odds with each other: TV's commerce vs. art's esthetic vision, video's two-dimensionality vs. the three-dimensional real word, the timeliness of TV vs. the timelessness of art. Artist Vito Acconci, writing in a recent anthology, argues that video installations are "the conjunction of opposites," like "having your cake and eating it too."

Video installations are also ephemeral. "It's an impermanent medium because video can fall apart," says Riley. Sometimes, when installations are disassembled for storage, all that remains are the videotapes and detailed specifications for reassembly. In fact, the rapid obsolescense of video technologies and the physical deterioration of tape make video installation among the most impermanent of art forms—a problem for anyone displaying such works.

Unlike paintings and sculptures, which can be shown and stored relatively easily, video installations require active maintenance and preservation. "We have to keep tapes under constant-temperature storage and strike off dubs every so often to make sure there's no signal loss," Riley explains. And no amount of preservation can keep older standards from becoming extinct. According to Riley, the original scale of many pieces is threatened, as once-common 19-inch monitors are being replaced on the market by 20-inch screens.

Also unlike paintings, video installations make unusual demands for exact placement, lighting and sound, which makes the works "not easily saleable," according to Donald Young, owner of Seattle's Donald Young Gallery, one of only a few commercial galleries that represent video installation artists. Young

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If you're curious about those shiny discs you've been seeing all over, you're not the only one. Hundreds of thousands of people have already brought laserdiscs home. It seems no one can pass up the latest movies on laserdisc, with its incredible picture (60% sharper than ordinary videotape) and flawless CD sound. You're probably next. Just be careful when you visit your nearby laserdisc store. The way it's been going, these things are likely to fly out as soon as you open the door. PIONEER LaserDisc



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VIDEO SHOWCASE

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BY STAN PINKWAS

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continued on page 87

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BY STAN PINKWAS

CUSTOM INSTALLATION OF THE MONTH



Blending In: A 50-inch projection TV centers an installation built around a private elevator artfully concealed behind a door to the right of the large TV.

GREAT ESCAPE

A stylish media den makes the most of an offbeat element—a private elevator.



Up and Away: Designer Bill Behrens beside the elevator, which runs from the garage to the floor above the media room.

An elegant media room can be a tall order when there's an immovable elevator smack in the middle of the blueprints. But that's the challenge Bill Behrens overcame with a stylish, wood-paneled treatment for a home on Amelia Island, off the northeast coast of Florida. The elevator actually seems to disappear, when not in use, behind ■ door paneled to blend into the media system, which is tucked into the left-hand side of ■ shared wall.

The video part of the system is based around a pair of TV sets—a 50-inch Pioneer Elite and a 27-inch JVC unit—placed relatively close together, although at different heights, because the home's owners often like to watch two programs at the same time. A Pioneer Elite laserdisc player and ■ JVC S-VHS VCR feed not only the sets, but monitors elsewhere in the house. The units are also assigned separate cable channels, so that someone can watch TV in the media room, while another person can watch a laserdisc in another room.

Behrens, who owns Behrens Audio Lab in nearby Jacksonville and belongs to the Custom Electronic Design and Installation Association (see box, page 87), worked out the complex plan with interior decorator Jennifer Palmer. It includes numerous, unobtrusive conveniences, like a set of Niles light dimmers, volume controls and headphone jacks under the rim of ■ coffee table.



Audio and Light Controls

KEVIN KIERNAN

To handle the audio, which includes surround sound for the main room and multizone distribution to five other rooms and three outdoor areas, Behrens turned chiefly to McIntosh:

continued on page 87

TAPES & DISCS

NEW RELEASES

FEATURE FILMS

101 Dalmatians

1961. Anim. Hi-fi stereo. (G) 80 min. $24.99. Walt Disney.

With memories of the extraordinary *Beauty and the Beast* still lingering, it's hard to call *101 Dalmatians* one of the top-drawer Disney animated features. It lacks the former's brilliant score, not to mention the kind of full-tilt production number (musical or otherwise) that lives on after the credits fade. This tale of a litter of puppies stolen for their uniquely spotted fur pushes the "lost kid" button, but lacks the resounding emotional impact of a treasured fairy tale brought to life. Mom and dad dogs Pongo and Perdita have their charm—even more than their human "pets" do—and some of the puppies are cute in a generic Disney way, but that's all.

So why does this film nonetheless evoke warm feelings of nostalgia in parents who first saw it in theaters? Three (or is it two?) words: Cruella De Ville.

The divinely decadent Cruella is one of the most memorable—and frightening—characters from our childhoods. The Antichrist of animal rights groups, blatantly expressing her desire to kill the pups and skin them for a new fur coat, Cruella is erratic and violent in a way few Disney characters are allowed to be. Watching her chew the scenery is alone worth the price of admission.

One of the big box-office hits of last year in yet another theatrical reissue, *101 Dalmatians* reaffirmed the power of straight-on storytelling and quality animation. The dogs reportedly required that Disney's staff draw nearly 6-1/2 million spots—but these dogs could be poodles for all I care. Cruella makes this movie crackle.

—Marianne Meyer



Dog Fancier: The ruthless Cruella De Ville plots the demise of those cute little Disney *Dalmatians*.

Dead Again

1991. Kenneth Branagh, Emma Thompson, Derek Jacobi; dir. Branagh. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R) 107 min. priced for rental. LD (letterboxed or pan-and-scan) $34.98. Paramount.

In 1949, concert pianist Margaret Strauss is murdered in a Los Angeles mansion and her composer-husband Roman is executed for it. Some 40 years later a young woman (Emma Thompson) turns up, mute and amnesiac, at the gate of that mansion. Private eye Mike Church (Kenneth Branagh) takes on the task of identifying her. She starts talking under hypnosis—not about her life but about Roman and Margaret. The disbelieving Mike is informed that Grace, as he calls her, is reliving a past-life experience. Apparently Mike was also part of that life, and the drama is about to play itself out again.

The premise of *Dead Again* is so preposterous it invites disbelief, but its execution is so assured, it suspends that disbelief entirely. As director, Branagh succeeds in keeping us in a hermetically sealed world where we never question the film's premise, no matter how fantastic it seems. The black-and-white 1949 scenes are filled with a heady mix of romance and dread, while the modern sequences careen from one wild plot twist to another, keeping us off balance. When Branagh resorts to the little tricks generally associated with the thriller genre, they're used to advance the movie rather than for their own sake.

Branagh exudes tortured charm as Roman and ingenuous charm as Mike. Thompson (Mrs. Branagh off-screen) is amazing as both Margaret and Grace, and the pair manage the sort of on-screen star chemistry that is the most sorely missed attribute of "classic" Hollywood filmmaking. The wonderful sup-

EDITOR'S CHOICE

by

kenneth korman

porting cast includes several "name" players who were willing to work with Branagh for a pittance after his brilliant *Henry V*.

There's enough going on in *Dead Again* to reward repeat viewings. At first viewing you may well have the time of your life—or is it lives?

—Sol Louis Siegel



A Leg Up: Andy Garcia (left) threatens to come between *Dead Again*'s Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson.

Rambling Rose

1991. Laura Dern, Robert Duvall, Diane Ladd; dir. Martha Coolidge. Hi-fi stereo. (R) 115 min. $92.98. LD $34.95. LIVE.

"Girls don't want sex—girls want love," explains sweet-hearted Rose (Laura Dern) to wide-eyed young Buddy (Lukas Haas). However, the awestruck men around her can't grasp the distinction, complicating matters for the simple heroine of this deceptively complex comedy-drama. Both a charming account of Depression-era Georgia and a subtle feminist statement, *Rambling Rose* slyly bends conventions to produce a deeply affecting tale.

When Rose arrives at the Hillyer home to serve as housekeeper and nanny, the well-to-do family gets more than it bargained for. A refugee from a dirt-poor farm, she has an open, guileless sexuality that quickly becomes a disruptive force. After literally throwing herself at the stunned Daddy (Robert Duvall), she focuses on more eligible men, inspiring scruffy boys to lurk in the yard. Daddy comes to regard Rose as a problem child, although Mother (Dern's real-life mom Diane Ladd) defends her high spirits as normal. Only the older woman's understanding saves Rose when a doctor proposes a surgical "cure" for the girl's promiscuity.

Director Martha Coolidge gets remarkable performances from the players. Avoiding hillbilly cliches, the radiant Dern strikes a balance between clumsy innocence and sensual charisma. Likewise, Duvall adds the nuances that make Daddy more than a macho cartoon, while Ladd deftly reveals the iron will within the matriarch's pose. As the 13-year-old verging on hot-blooded adolescence, Lukas Haas steals scenes right and left: Buddy's close encounter with Rose is the funniest bedroom session in a month of Sundays. Thanks to intriguing characters, *Rambling Rose* makes a compelling argument for tolerance—and provides a darn good time to boot.

—Jon Young



Moral Turpitude: Robert Duvall and Diane Ladd contend with the rambunctious *Rose*.

Warm, funny and quietly inspired, director Alan Parker's **The Commitments** (FoxVideo, priced for rental) sneaked in and out of theaters last year, reaching only a fraction of the huge audience it deserves. It's a "small" movie, the kind Hollywood never knows how to market effectively. But this fictional tale of a Dublin soul band's unlikely rise benefits from its lack of big-name stars; Parker (*Mississippi Burning, Midnight Express*) instead relies on a sharp script and a brilliant cast of complete unknowns. The film maintains its high spirits without glossing over the day-to-day realities of its working-class characters.

The director auditioned virtually every young musician in Dublin to find the right mix of characters—he claims to have seen 3,000 performers from the city's 1,200 working bands. Though many of these kids have never acted before, they are completely natural before the camera. The music they create is astonishing: It's not always a good idea to cover the songs of Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett—"Try a Little Tenderness" and "In the Midnight Hour" have already been *done*, after all—but these kids manage to make the songs sound utterly fresh, to make them their own. This is no small feat. (Two band members, including extraordinary 16-year-old lead singer Andrew Strong, have been signed to real-life recording contracts by MCA.)



The Commitments

A 24-minute promotional cassette called *The Making of The Commitments* is widely available in stores as a free rental; it was intended to build interest in the film just before its video release, but it's best viewed after you've already seen the movie. Its interviews with the "stars" and other behind-the-scenes footage are far more captivating when you've already built up an emotional attachment to these characters and their infectious music—and that is something *The Commitments* pulls off with amazing ease. ■

An Angel at My Table

1991. Kerry Fox; dir. Jane Campion. Hi-fi stereo. (R) 157 min. priced for rental. New Line.

Director Jane Campion triumphed in turning the concept of mental illness into the potent black comedy *Sweetie*, so it's no surprise that Campion should be perfect for *An Angel at My Table*, a project based on the memoirs of New Zealand author Janet Frame. Frame was misdiagnosed as schizophrenic while attending teacher's college, spent the following eight years in a series of squalid hospital wards and was reprieved from a lobotomy-like operation only when a collection of her short stories won a noted literature prize.

An Angel at My Table is divided into three segments. (It was originally presented abroad as ■ TV miniseries.) The first, "To the Is-Land," focuses on Frame's childhood in rural New Zealand in the early '30s, the first stirrings of her talent and the first of several family tragedies. Part two, from which the film derives its title, follows Frame's retreat to the teacher's college she vowed to avoid and details the series of events that culminate in her institutionalization. The final segment, "The Envoy From Mirror City," shows Frame's belated flourish into womanhood and growing artistic triumph, though here *Angel* flirts dangerously with TV-movie territory.

Screenwriter Laura Jones has admirably adapted the flow of Janet Frame's autobiographies and actress Kerry Fox imbues the adult Frame with the perfect conflict of shyness and zeal. But the greatest triumph belongs to director Campion, who conveys perfectly that the greatest threat to sanity is to try to define it. **—JW**



Down on the Farm: *An Angel at My Table* traces Janet Frame's life from childhood to success as a writer.

Trust

1991. Adrienne Shelly, Martin Donovan; dir. Hal Hartley. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R) 109 min. $89.98. LD $29.98. Republic.

Maria Coughlin (Adrienne Shelly) is having a *really* bad day. She's pregnant, she's quit/been tossed out of high school and, if that weren't enough, she's just killed her father with a slap to the face. Faring only slightly better is brilliant misfit Mathew Slaughter (Martin Donovan), a twenty-something electronics repairman who still lives at home, has just quit/been fired from his umpteenth job and has finally come to blows with *his* father over the issue of cleaning the bathroom. With cinematic parallels like these, it's inevitable that Maria and Mathew will wind up involved. Fortunately, *Trust* is no off-the-rack, offbeat Hollywood romance.

Director Hal Hartley continues the tradition he established with 1990's *The Unbelievable Truth*: setting a mild shaggy-dog story against the backdrop of blue-collar suburban Long Island and letting his characters tangle into ■ goony web that snares the viewer but good. Complicating *Trust* is the sullen effort of Maria's mom (Merritt Nelson) to trick Mathew into the arms of Maria's divorced sister (Edie Falco), ■ mysterious baby-snatching that Maria may have witnessed, and, of course, Mathew's hand grenade.

Starkly complex and hilarious, *Trust* is a low-budget triumph crammed with wisdom that should cost a lot more **—JW**

The Fisher King

1991. Robin Williams, Jeff Bridges, Mercedes Ruehl, Amanda Plummer; dir. Terry Gilliam. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 137 min. $94.98. LD $39.95, Criterion LD (letterboxed) $99.95. Columbia TriStar.

There's more good than bad in *The Fisher King*, though the film never really gels. Jeff Bridges plays a shock-radio DJ drowning in self-pity after one of his tirades leads to unexpected disaster. Then he's rescued from ■ bad situation by Parry (Robin Williams), a self-styled knight of the Holy Grail. Upon learning that Parry was unhinged by the earlier tragedy, he resolves to bring him back to sanity to gain redemption for himself.

The biggest problem is that Parry is too much a "Robin Williams role," with Williams so far into hyperdrive that he becomes tiring. So does the direction of Terry Gilliam, who resorts to murky symbolism plus pretentious camera angles and lighting effects that seem especially obtrusive on video. The movie never finds its tone or pace, and suffers from the vain effort to get it down to manageable length.

On the plus side, Bridges is excellent in a difficult role. As the love interests, Mercedes Ruehl (fiery) and Amanda Plummer (quirky and endearing) domi-



Strike Up the Band: *The Fisher King*'s Robin Williams leads fellow patients in "How About You?"

nate in roles that could have been merely generic. And when Gilliam manages scenes like the one in which Grand Central Station turns into a glowing ballroom full of waltzing couples, you may be inclined to forgive this ambitious epic its most grievous flaws. **—SLS**

Other People's Money

1991. Danny DeVito, Penelope Ann Miller, Gregory Peck; dir. Norman Jewison. Hi-fi surround, cc. (R) 101 min. $94.99. 8mm, LD (letterboxed) $29.98. Warner.

Danny DeVito's "Larry the Liquidator" is the Terminator for the Wall Street set, as devastating as Arnold and just as surprisingly lovable. In *Other People's Money*, he gobbles up companies as gleefully as his daily box of Dunkin' Donuts, and when he barks for his secretary to summon the manicurist and barber (he's about to see his sweetie) he's almost, well, *cute*.

Larry's latest target, New England Wire & Cable, is a people-first organization run by "Jorgy" Jorgenson (played one-dimensionally by Gregory Peck). When the Liquidator moves in, Jorgy's assistant (Piper Laurie) enlists her savvy attorney daughter (miscast kewpie doll Penelope Ann Miller) to tempt the Liquidator away from this conquest.

Director Norman Jewison disguised the mating ritual as a battle of the sexes more effectively in *Moonstruck*; here it's just posturing. And except for DeVito's raider-with-a-hint-of-gold characterization and an ending that doesn't turn predictable and insincere, *Other People's Money* might be better off staying in other people's pockets.

—April P. Bernard



Towers of Power: Danny DeVito looms large in *Other People's Money.*

Backtrack

1991. Jodie Foster, Dennis Hopper, Joe Pesci; dir. Hopper. Hi-fi stereo. (R) 102 min. $89.98. Vestron.

When *Backtrack*'s main character Milo (Dennis Hopper) whines, "I gave up my *career* for you!" to his latest flame,



Married to the Mob: Dennis Hopper's hit man falls for intended victim Jodie Foster in *Backtrack.*

the fact that he's a hit man and his new gal was supposed to be the hit-ee gives the line a little more than a twist. But now that director Hopper's original edit of his 1989 effort is available (a studio cut was released briefly in Britain as *Catch Fire*), one can see that *Backtrack* was never *meant* to be just an everyday love story.

Anne Benton (Jodie Foster) is just about to hit the big time with her electronic "message" art when a flat tire strands her right next to a gangland rubout. Now the mob wants to show her what they do to material witnesses, and after considering what the federal witness protection program can do to an artist's career momentum, Anne decides to take it on the lam *independently*. That's when the mob decides to bring in Milo. *Big* mistake.

Jodie Foster is delightful as the reciprocatingly smitten fugitive, and Hopper-the-director has plundered his Rolodex to come up with a "who's who" of cameos, including Vincent Price as the godfather, Dean Stockwell, John Turturro and an unbilled Joe Pesci as goodfellas, Charlie Sheen as Anne's luckless boyfriend, and the ubiquitous Bob Dylan as a chainsaw-wielding sculptor who, when pressed, coolly dismisses Benton's art as "too literal."

This reconstructed edition of *Backtrack* is a nice *and* weird vindication of Hopper's vision. **—JW**

Tatie Danielle

1991. Tsilla Chelton, Catherine Jacob; dir. Etienne Chatiliez. Hi-fi stereo, subtitled. (NR) 114 min. $89.98. LIVE.

According to its box-blurb, *Tatie Danielle* ("Auntie Danielle") "is the meanest old lady on earth." However, this reasonably accurate statement is followed by, "Nobody likes her and she likes no one in return." Potential browsers should be warned that nothing could be further from the truth in this French import that positively revels in the nastiness of its title character. Make no mistake, Tatie Danielle (Tsilla Chelton) doesn't like *anybody*. But what makes *Tatie Danielle* soar into the outer reaches of outrageousness is the fact that nearly everyone she encounters is absolutely blind to her ill will—like Odile, the elderly housekeeper who *adores* Tatie right up to the "accident."

Tatie then descends on her Parisian nephew (Eric Prat), his saintly wife (Catherine Jacob) and their sons, proceeding to wage a one-sided battle of nerves that leaves the well-meaning Billard family dumbfounded—but never suspecting the deliberate nature of the Tatie malice. Be it faking incontinence or ditching her toddler nephew in the park, Tatie is a wizard at the mean turn. But when the Billards escape to Greece for a well-earned vacation, Tatie Danielle finally meets her match in the form of Sandrine (Isabelle Nanty), the young and vaguely delinquent companion hired to keep an eye on her.

Directed by Etienne Chatiliez, *Tatie Danielle* will delight those who like their comedy black. **—JW**



All Tapped Out: Spencer Tracy reaches the bottom of his financial well in the original *Father of the Bride.*

LASERDISCS

The Devil and Daniel Webster

1941. B&W. Walter Huston, Edward Arnold, Simone Simon; pr./dir. William Dieterle. Digital mono, commentary on analog track. 106 min. CLV 2 sides. $49.95. Voyager/Criterion.

Here's a restoration that might be better described as a reconstruction. Some 22 minutes of previously "lost" footage have finally been recovered and reassembled for this underrated classic, giving us the first complete version of William Dieterle's *The Devil and Daniel Webster* in 40 years.

Basically a seriocomic version of Faust transplanted to 19th-century New England, the film follows the plight of a simple farmer (James Craig) who sells his soul to the Devil (Walter Huston) in return for "all that money can buy." After seven years of increasingly tainted good luck, it's time to pay the Devil his due. Perdition will have to wait though, because the farmer's soul is saved by the legal cunning of statesman Daniel Webster (Edward Arnold). Arguing before a supernatural court, Webster eloquently tries to convince a jury of the damned that an American is a free man, soul and all.

This simple plot line is conveyed with striking cinematic sophistication, aided in no small part by Dieterle's moody direction and Bernard Herrmann's remarkable, Oscar-winning score. The key performances are also inspired, especially Huston's priceless portrayal of the satanic Mr. Scratch. Charming and twinkle-eyed, Huston is an unsettlingly likable Mephisto—we almost feel sorry that he may lose the hero's soul.

The Devil and Daniel Webster is a far richer film than the prior video release might have indicated. Characters and subtexts are now fleshed out, revealing an ambitious essay on temptation, corruption and redemption. While the restored footage (culled from a rediscovered 16mm print) doesn't quite match up to rest of the fine-grain 35mm transfer, the overall tradeoff is more than worthwhile. An informative audio commentary rounds out this superb Criterion presentation.

—Ron Goldberg

High Plains Drifter

1973. Clint Eastwood, Verna Bloom, Billy Curtis; dir. Eastwood. Digital mono, letterboxed, cc. 106 min. CLV 2 sides. $34.98. MCA/Universal.

High Plains Drifter will make you wonder how anyone ever accused Clint Eastwood of espousing reactionary politics in his movies. Amid the murders, rape and maimings that amply fill this revenge western/ghost story, he defends Native Americans, Mexicans and every other minority on hand while relentlessly attacking white hypocrisy.



Go Wide, Young Man: *High Plains Drifter*'s widescreen image is finally restored on the film's new laserdisc edition.

Two elements lost in TV presentations of the film are restored on this laserdisc—its widescreen aspect ratio and its unabashed violence. The Panavision image is cropped slightly, but still revels in clever and revealing compositions by director Eastwood. Between the sharp picture and the restored violence, it's like seeing the movie for the first time.

The acting is nondescript—Eastwood has fewer than 80 lines, though Bill Curtis and Verna Bloom are effective in supporting roles. The sound has fine detail but relatively little punch. And the trailer is a minor but entertaining bonus.

—Bruce Eder

Father of the Bride

1950. B&W. Spencer Tracy, Elizabeth Taylor; dir. Vincente Minnelli. Digital mono. 94 min. (plus trailer). CLV 2 sides. $34.98. MGM/UA.

"Quaint" best describes this charmingly deadpan examination of a modern wedding. As seen through the eyes of the bride's curmudgeonly, soon-to-be-overleveraged father (Spencer Tracy), these overblown affairs confuse the petty and the sacred. The film is predictable and dated—witness the use of alcohol as a comic device—yet delightful.

Father of the Bride benefits from Tracy's weary, resigned delivery and the touching scenes between father and daughter; Elizabeth Taylor, who doesn't really have much to do besides look radiant as the bride, does that quite well. The movie becomes tedious only when the slapstick gets out of hand. (Oddly, the film's most inspired moment comes in a frightening nightmare sequence that looks like an outtake from *Carnival of Souls.*) It's squeaky-clean fun—and

more genuine in spirit than the recent, almost verbatim, Steve Martin remake.
—Lorraine Cademartori

Woodstock: The Lost Performances

1991. Pr. Bob Kaminsky and Peter Kaminsky. Digital stereo, cc. 68 min. CLV 2 sides. $34.98. Warner.

When the mudslide we know as Woodstock was pegged as the cultural event of a generation, the reputation of the *music* performed there tagged along for the ride. And despite the fact that artists like Richie Havens and John Sebastian can't get arrested in today's marketplace (or, in the case of Sly Stone, can *only* get arrested), the musicians who appeared at Woodstock enjoy a status that is historical if not necessarily *enduring*. Consequently, the hodgepodge of performance outtakes that comprise *Woodstock: The Lost Performances* possesses a certain value by dint of their mere existence.

At the high end, The Band is captured in a barely salvaged take of "The Weight," revealing Robbie Robertson in his shaggy pre-Hollywood glory; "Drifting Blues" is performed by a lineup of the Paul Butterfield band that features a young David Sanborn on sax; Janis Joplin's seething "Work Me Lord" captures her vitality though it's patched together with bits of black-and-white videotape; and Crosby, Stills & Nash still seem fresh with "Marrakesh Express" and the Beatles' "Blackbird."

Woodstock: The Lost Performances has a grubby fossil-like charm that fills a couple of gaps in the Woodstock archives. Expect no more and you won't be disappointed. **—JW**

The Music Man

1961. Robert Preston, Shirely Jones, Buddy Hackett, Hermione Gingold; pr./dir. Morton DaCosta. Hi-fi surround, letterboxed, cc. (G) 151 min. CLV 3 sides. $39.98. Warner.

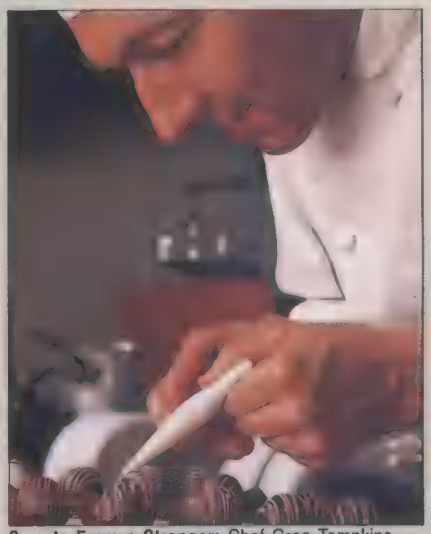
Panning-and-scanning *The Music Man* reduces barbershop quartets to trios, turns Onna White's elaborate production numbers into claustrophobic dances and only makes room for about 50 of the "Seventy-Six Trombones." But Warner's new letterboxed laserdisc edition shows off Meredith Willson's classic musical at its widescreen "Technirama" best.

And this Best Picture nominee deserves the royal treatment. After 883 performances on Broadway as Professor Harold Hill—a con man who, for a small deposit, can "keep the River City kids moral after school" by forming a boys' brass band—Robert Preston transferred his glib, charismatic character to the big screen with pizzazz. *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel* veteran Shirley Jones is charming—and in wonderful voice—as the starry-eyed librarian who falls under Hill's spell, but a lisping Ronny Howard—though adorable—is a stretch as the old maid's much-younger brother.

Morton DaCosta directed *The Music Man* with an eye toward spectacle, but of the small-town variety. Iowans sipping strawberry phosphates in the soda shop and racing to greet the Wells-Fargo wagon are all preserved in Technicolor pastels on the disc. Flickering in light-colored patches is occasionally a problem, but otherwise the picture looks great. And if you don't at least take a peek at this disc, well my friends, "Ya Got Trouble." **—APB**



Lead the Way: River City, Iowa's latest arrival (Robert Preston) touts the marvels of a marching band in *The Music Man.*



Sweets From a Stranger: Chef Greg Tompkins decorates truffles in *Cooking at the Academy.*

SPECIAL INTEREST

Cooking at the Academy

1991. "Pasta," "Sauteing," "Poaching & Steaming," "Candy & Chocolate." Hi-fi stereo. 30 min. each. $14.95 each. International Video Network.

The strength of this 13-tape series, featuring chefs from the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco, is its focus on technique. Each tape presents three recipes, all variations on the cassette's main theme. In "Poaching & Steaming," for example, chef Brian Mattingly prepares a filet of beef, stuffed chicken breasts and a whole steamed fish. Seasoning ranges from the subtle to the spectacular, and all accompaniments are explained and prepared. Miraculously, all this is done in a stress-free way, despite each dish's 10-minute limit.

You're not meant to watch these programs, whisk at the ready, while standing at your kitchen counter. Recipe cards are included instead, and a cookbook is offered at each tape's end. What these tapes do so effectively is walk you through the processes, explaining the whys of each step, including choosing ingredients, dicing and slicing, and presentation. This forms a solid basis for the beginning cook, while the recipes offer new ideas to the more advanced.

The series' big disappointment is the heavy-handed presence of Braun, its underwriter. The same four commercials begin and end each tape, there are two sponsor IDs, and the company's tony appliances even appear in the instructional segments, though thankfully unnamed. But forgive them their trespasses if you're interested in cooking, because there's a lot to be learned here—and it goes down easy. **—Terence Poltrack**

DIRECTORY



All Hands on Deck: Leonard Nimoy discusses his directorial work on a new version of *Star Trek IV.*

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

An American Tail: Fievel Goes West
1991. Anim. Voices of John Cleese, Dom DeLuise, Amy Irving, James Stewart. Go west, young Mousekewitz! Hi-fi surround, cc. (G) 75 min. VHS, Beta $24.95. LD $24.98 (CLV 2 sides), $39.98 (letterboxed, CAV 3 sides). MCA/Universal.

The Commitments
1991. Robert Arkins, Michael Aherne, Angeline Hall; dir. Alan Parker. Superb analysis of the rise and fall of a Dublin band, from the director of *Midnight Express* and *Mississippi Burning*. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R) 116 min. VHS, Beta $94.98. FoxVideo.

Coup de Torchon
1981. Phillipe Noiret, Isabelle Huppert; dir. Bertrand Tavernier. *Round Midnight* director's portrait of a buffoonish cop turned vigilante in 1938 French West Africa was nominated for a Best Foreign Film Oscar. Darkly comic. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 128 min. VHS only, $59.95. First Run Features.

The Dark Backward
1991. Judd Nelson, Wayne Newton, Lara Flynn Boyle, James Caan, Rob Lowe; dir. Adam Rifkin. When you're a no-talent stand-up comic named Marty Malt, nothing can boost your career like a third arm. Weirdly fantastic (and fantastically weird). Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R) 100 min. VHS $89.95. LD $34.95. Columbia TriStar.

The Dawn of Sound
1929. Color/B&W. Three early musicals—*Broadway Melody* (the first Academy Award-winning musical), *Hollywood Review of 1929* and *Show of Shows*—and a fabulous record of the era. Digital mono. (NR) 355 min. LD $69.98. MGM/UA.

The Directors' Series—Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home
1986. William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley; dir. Nimoy. Outtakes, behind-the-scenes footage and an introduction from the director (a.k.a. Spock) make this tape—opening the series along with Adrian Lyne's *Fatal Attraction*—unique. Stereo, letterboxed, cc. (PG) 136 min. VHS, Beta $29.95. LD (digital) $49.95. Paramount.

The Doctor
1991. William Hurt, Christine Lahti, Elizabeth Perkins; dir. Randa Haines. Regarding William, from *Children of a Lesser God*'s director: Unfeeling doctor learns about compassion when he becomes the patient. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG-13) 123 min. VHS, Beta priced for rental. Touchstone.

George of the Jungle
Anim. 4 vols./3 segments per cass. From Jay Ward, the slightly warped brain behind Rocky & Bullwinkle, comes George of the Jungle, Super Chicken and Tom Slick in a "greentoon" promoting environmental awareness. Aired in the late '60s, early '70s. Mono. (NR) Approx. 34 min. each. VHS only, $9.98 each. CBS/Fox.

The Jungle Book
1967. Anim. Mowgli on disc. Digital surround, cc. (G) 78 min. CAV $39.99. CLV $29.99. Walt Disney.

The Killing Fields
1984. Sam Waterston, Dr. Haing S. Ngor; dir. Roland Joffe. Powerful and affecting: Newspaper man and guide form a unique bond in volatile 1975 Cambodia. Digital surround, letterboxed, cc. (R) 142 min. Side 3 CAV. LD $39.98. Warner.

Little Man Tate
1991. Adam Hann-Byrd, Jodie Foster, Dianne Wiest; dir. Foster. Reviews were mixed on this story—a 7-year-old genius, alienated from his peers, is torn between

Compiled by April P. Bernard

Labels For Less

April spotlights the silver screen's finest directors, and **FoxVideo** salutes six with $19.98 "Director's Choice" selections. The best picks are Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands*, Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V* and Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas*. **Turner** debuts several titles from "RKO's Great Directors," such as Orson Welles' *The Stranger* and John Ford's *The Lost Patrol*, all for $19.98. And don't forget one man who made the directors look good: special-effects genius Ray Harryhausen, a 1992 special Oscar winner. **Columbia TriStar** has priced six of his works at $14.95. Meanwhile, **MGM/UA**'s $19.98 "Screen Masterpieces" share a host of Oscar nominations and wins. New releases include the powerful *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang* plus Norma Shearer's *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, while prices have been cut on *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and more.

MCA/Universal isn't joking with its "April Fool's Collection," cutting prices on 16 titles from *King Ralph* to *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* down to $14.95 and $19.95...Cult classics are at Columbia TriStar, with *The Last Picture Show* and three Monty Python flicks now $19.95. **—APB**



Edward Scissorhands

his down-to-earth mother and a child psychologist—notable as the directorial debut of "hot property" Foster. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (PG) 99 min. VHS only, $92.98. Orion.

A Little Romance
1979. Diane Lane, Thelonius Bernard, Laurence Olivier; dir. George Roy Hill. Utterly charming: Youngsters taste first love in Paris, with Olivier as a courtly con man who helps them plan a special rendezvous via gondola. Digital mono, letterboxed. (PG) 108 min. LD $34.98. Warner.

Paradise
1991. Don Johnson, Melanie Griffith, Elijah Wood; dir. Mary Agnes Donoghue. Visiting 10-year-old boy helps mend rift between young couple grieving the loss of their son. Hi-fi surround, cc. (PG-13) 112 min. VHS, Beta $92.95. Touchstone.

The Philadelphia Story
1940. B&W. Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, James Stewart; dir. George Cukor. Hepburn dismissed her "box-office poison" label with this, one of the most sparkling comedies ever to come out of Hollywood. Based on the Philip Barry play. Remastered, includes trailer. Digital mono. (NR) 112 min. LD $34.98. MGM/UA.

Ricochet
1991. Denzel Washington, John Lithgow, Ice T; dir. Russell Mulcahy. Lithgow, as a deliciously sinister killer, methodically works to destroy the cop who put him away—piece by piece. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R) 110 min. VHS only, $94.99. HBO.

Sarah, Plain and Tall
1990. Glenn Close, Christopher Walken; dir. Glenn Jordan. Hallmark Hall of Fame drama: Nine Emmy nominations were showered on this heartwarmer about a 1910 mail-order bride and the family she touches. Stereo, cc. (G) 98 min. VHS $89.98. LD (digital) $29.98. Republic.

The 3 Mesquiteers
1937-40. B&W. 12 vols. John Wayne, Bob Livingston, Ray "Crash" Corrigan, Bob Steele and Duncan Renaldo populated this western trio, who shot 'em up, knocked 'em out—and rode off into the sunset with the likes of Rita Hayworth and Louise Brooks. Mono. (NR) Approx. 54 min. each. VHS only, $9.98 each. Republic.

We All Have Tales
1991. Anim. 2 vols. Raul Julia narrates "The Monkey People," a South American fable accompanied by a Lee Ritenour score and remarkable silhouette drawings from *New York Times* illustrator Diana Bryan; Tracey Ullman puts on voice after voice for the French tale "Puss in Boots," while Jean-Luc Ponty's score and Pierre Le-Tan's illustrations flow. Hi-fi stereo. (NR) 30 min. each. VHS only, $9.95 each. Rabbit Ears.

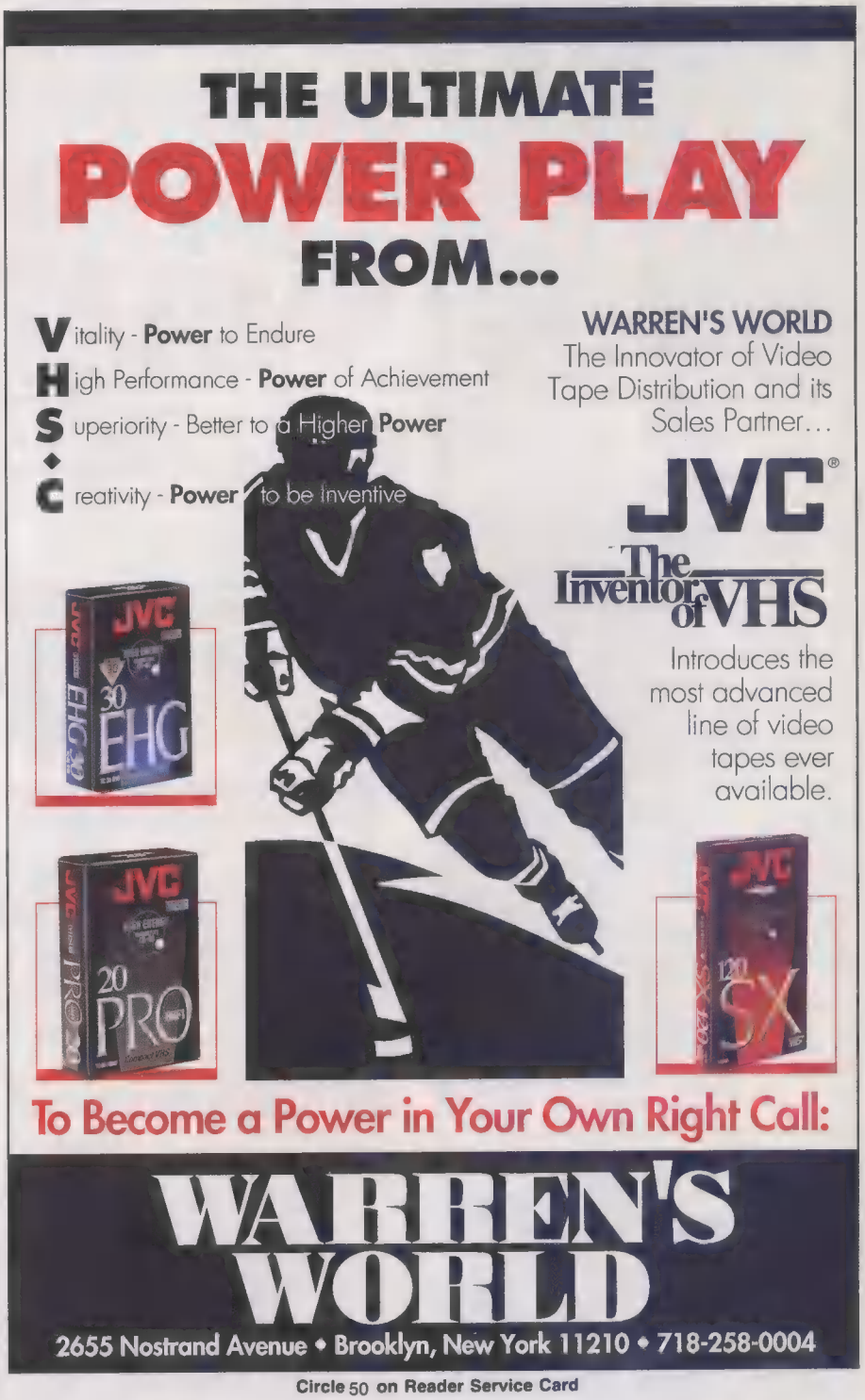
We Reinvent the Circus
1992. A spectacular circus like no other, with the traditional performers—trapeze artists, tightrope walkers, acrobats, "clowns" and contortionists—doing very untraditional things. Hi-fi stereo. 55 min. VHS only, $19.95. Island Visual Arts/PolyGram.

When Father Was Away on Business
1985. Moreno D'E Bartolli, Miki Manojlovic; dir Emir Kusturica. ...he was really in a Yugoslav labor camp, punishment for sharing a mistress with a Communist Party member. A Cannes Best Film, winningly seen through the eyes of the 6-year-old son. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 144 min. VHS only, $89.95. Fox Lorber.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf
1966. B&W. Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor; dir. Mike Nichols. Thirteen Oscar nominations went to Mike Nichols' first film directing effort, a look at a college professor and his bitter wife. Profanity shocked audiences; studio execs, after a screening, said they had a "$7.5 million dirty picture" on their hands. Digital surround, letterboxed, cc. (NR) 129 min. $39.98. Warner.

COMEDY

Livin' Large
1991. Terrance "T.C." Carson, Blanche Bak-



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er; dir. Michael Schultz. Delivery boy lucks into TV newsman spot, and is instantly smitten with fame and fortune. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R) 95 min. VHS only, $92.99. HBO.

Necessary Roughness
1991. Scott Bakula, Hector Elizondo, Robert Loggia; dir. Stan Dragoti. *The Bad News Bears* play football. Stereo, cc. (PG-13) 108 min. VHS, Beta priced for rental. Paramount.

The Super
1991. Joe Pesci; dir. Rod Daniel. Slumlord forced to live in his own building. Hi-fi stereo, cc. (R) 86 min. VHS, Beta $94.98. FoxVideo.

DRAMA

Hill Number One
1951. B&W. James Dean, Roddy McDowell; dir. Arthur Pierson. An Easter broadcast from TV's golden years—opening as Korean War soldiers hear the biblical tale—featuring James Dean in his first dramatic role, John the Baptist. Mono. (NR) 60 min. VHS only, $14.95. Rhino.

Star Trek: The Next Generation
1987. Vols. 5-8. Syndication's top show: "Haven," "Where No One Has Gone Before," "The Last Outpost" and "Lonely Among Us." Hi-fi mono, cc. 46 min. each.

continued on page 60

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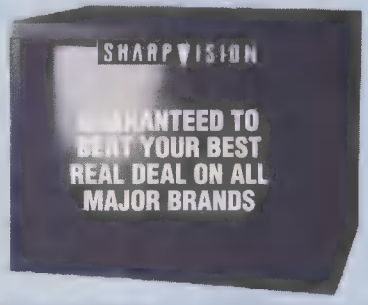
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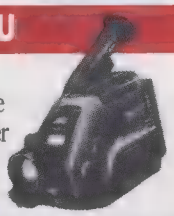
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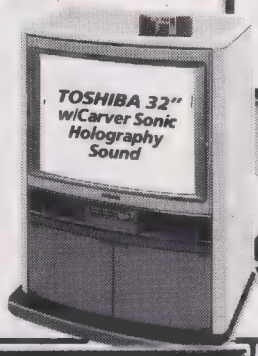
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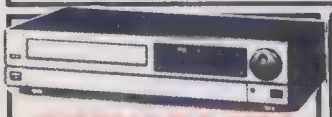
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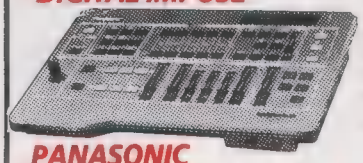
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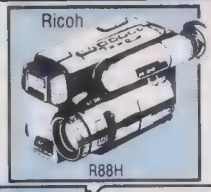














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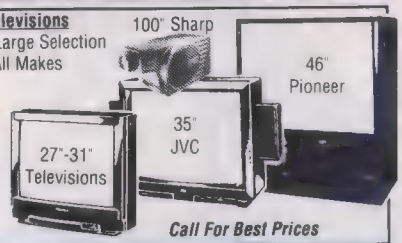
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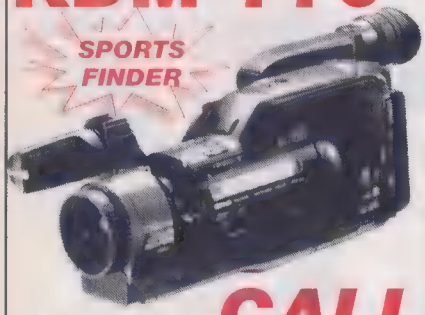
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The Tale of Peter Rabbit
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The Humanoid
1986. Japanese *anime* entry, with a futuristic robot named Antoinette blocking one man's quest to rule the universe. Stereo, subtitled. 45 min. VHS only, $34.95. U.S. Manga Corps.

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1991. Color/B&W. From Alice Guy Blanche, the first person to make a film with a plot (in 1896), and on. Mono. 56 min. VHS only, $19.95. VCI.

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Dakota
1945. B&W. John Wayne, Vera Ralston, Walter Brennan; dir. Joseph Kane. Below the usual Wayne standards, but interesting for the male performers. Digital mono. (NR) 82 min. $34.98. Republic.

Splendor in the Grass
1961. Warren Beatty, Natalie Wood; dir. Elia Kazan. When rich boy-poor girl romance breaks up, she breaks down. Beatty's film debut, and better than the average tearjerker. Digital mono, cc. (NR) 124 min. $39.98. Warner.

Treasure Island
1990. Charlton Heston, Christian Bale, Oliver Reed; dir. Fraser C. Heston. Exceptional made-for-cable venture: Robert Louis Stevenson's classic, richly told. Digital surround. (NR) 131 min. Side 3 CAV. $39.95. Image.

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NOUVEAU

continued from page 37

has been able to develop a small, but growing collectors' market for video installations, like those of Bill Viola, which sell for between $65,000 and $100,000, prices comparable to those for other large contemporary art works.

But most financial support for video installations comes from federal and state institutions like the National Endowment and New York State's Council on the Arts. However with tax dollars drying up, only a handful of new installations win grants each year.

It's in museums that video installations are finally coming into their own, says Riley, whose own museum boasts one of the largest permanent museum collections of video installations. Why museums? "People's notion of television and video has changed," observes Joanne Hanley, former curator of video and performance at the Museum of the Moving Image in New York City. "Viewers are willing to see video in other contexts than their living rooms."

But video installations are becoming more noticed because they're also entertaining. "People instinctively wander over to video installations in museums," says Bill Horrigan, curator of media arts at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio. "They're noisy and fun and they take advantage of the familiar aura of television."

In fact, don't be surprised if video installations enter the home soon. Already, the large-screen monitors and projection TV sets at the heart of home theater systems owe something to the quest for bigger images by video installation artists. With the arrival of low-cost, reliable consumer displays, personal-sized video installations too should become readily available.

Thanks to the latest technology the future of the least saleable of art forms looks bright. Video installations are finally standardizing around laserdiscs, after nearly three decades of using easily damaged videotape. Cheaper pressing costs and a greater choice of players now make laserdiscs ideal for non-stop replay in video installations.

A new wave of computer-based multimedia technology could further lower costs for video installations. With the introduction of large flat LCD displays in the next few years, it will be easy to hang installations without worrying about the heat and bulk of CRT displays. Inexpensive video projection systems will also make it possible to create video installations wherever there is an available surface. The result, according to the Whitney's Hanhardt, could be an era when "video art installations are as omnipresent as painting." Or even as commonplace as television. ■

CAMERAMAN

continued from page 33

first to home at the local Little League field and you can professionally preserve your prodigy's performance from the bleachers.

And for those willing to be a little outrageous, here's what ParkerVision executives tried last Halloween, while testing the unit. They set CameraMan on a stool, ran the audio line to an external speaker and the video to a field monitor, set lights on the camcorder for "eyes," draped a sheet over the contraption—then set it on a porch to greet unwary trick-or-treaters.

Young candy-grabbers—confronted by this swiveling, tilting, talking, ghost-like wraith—were startled, even scared. One flustered youngster actually left some of her hard-earned goodies behind as a peace offering. How do we know? We saw the video shot by the CameraMan and his remote cohort hiding in a hallway, well out of sight.

What's the catch? There is one, and it's price. The CameraMan's future-is-here technology doesn't come cheap. The base and the wand are $1,495. The Camera Controller is an additional $119, an optional CameraMan collar with a lavaliere mic for hands-free operation is $199, and a travel bag is another $99 (even though the CameraMan is a bit bulky to be hauled around much).

CameraMan also has some shortcomings. For instance, when used at home, the AC wires—one from the base and one from your camcorder—restrict the full swivel. And you'll need two polarized outlets, since there's no auxiliary AC outlet on the base for a camcorder's AC converter. But the most annoying nit we have to pick is with the wand. Despite being packed with dozens of control functions, it cannot turn the CameraMan on or off. However, these are minor quibbles with a truly useful new way to extend a camcorder's reach and power.

And, like those goofy late-night commercials say, this product is not available in stores. For the time being, it's available only by mail (800-428-8543 for ordering information). But CameraMan is the accessory that will keep your camcorder out of the dusty closet, and mounted wherever it's most convenient for instant and unobtrusive use whenever company arrives. If you've got the bucks, go for the bang. ■

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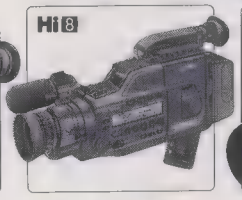
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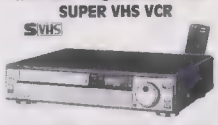
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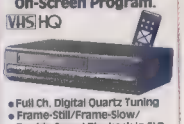


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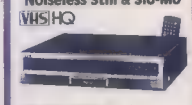


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HOOTENANNY

continued from page 31

player, the LA-2150K, for $999.

In addition, several companies make amplifier/microphone input modules that plug into any stereo source, including VCRs and laserdisc players. These include RJP Electronics' Star Mate, for $119, Karaoke King's FA-100 TV Karaoke Singalong and the Corvus LK600.

PARTY ANIMALS

At our party, we tested Pioneer's CLD-V820 and Nikkodo's LV-2000, both of which offer two-sided play and an array of up-to-date features. For example, the V820 (like all the Pioneer machines, save the entry-level V510) has a nine-step digital key controller, which came in handy when my friend Dave needed Elton John's "Crocodile Rock" transposed down to a key that wouldn't attract dogs.

The Pioneers also have six digital signal processing settings, like "stage" and "arena," that add echo above and beyond the independent echo control on the microphone. A "chorus" function adds digitized harmonic voices. Pioneer players also have two mic inputs with separate volume controls that don't affect the music. In karaoke mode, both the Pioneer and Nikkodo machines automatically pause at the end of each cut, making it easier to play DJ.

Both machines also share a feature Pioneer calls "one-touch karaoke," which is intended to remove the lead vocals from any standard CD. It works by digitally repressing a section of the midrange, but only on modern, deep-mix discs. For example, one-touch karaoke effectively and eerily removes Tom Petty's nasal tones from "Into the Great Open Wide." It snips Bonnie Raitt's contralto from "Luck of the Draw." However, it also cuts out the lead guitar work. It makes Jim Morrison's *voce di petto* disappear, but leaves the rest of the Doors hollow and echoey. And one-touch just makes old Elvis and Beatles recordings sound tinny, with the vocals affected little if at all.

In use, both machines operated like standard laserdisc players. However, the feature-packed Pioneer unit had to be switched into karaoke mode from standard play. Further, the two-sided aspect often became confusing, leading to wrong selections popping up on the screen. Both machines were a little slow in tracking down selected tracks—or seemed slow to those of us playing amateur DJ and to the poor souls standing alone and apprehensive in the party spotlight. The Nikkodo player, which was simpler to operate, at least announced its ongoing table of contents search, leading partygoers to chant "TOC CHECK," in anticipation of a song, as the words flashed across the screen.

But karaoke is about more than multiple-use hardware. Karaoke is an experience that differs from culture to culture. In regimented Japan, a disciplined method for letting go, with a touch of self-deprecation, becomes cultural group therapy. Here, we make fools of ourselves with only minor prompting and a couple of beers. "Karaoke is a different type of *Gong Show*," is how one party guest put it.

While today's home karaoke technology is state-of-the-art, the musical trappings need work. The laserdiscs, which come in eight- and 12-inch sizes, include musical productions that sometimes add unintentional laughs. The eight-inch discs by Pioneer are generally

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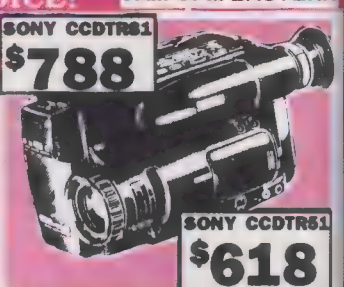
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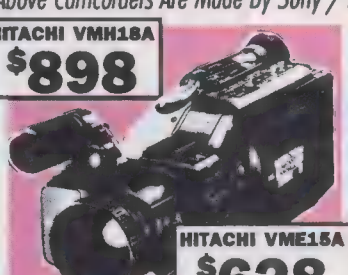
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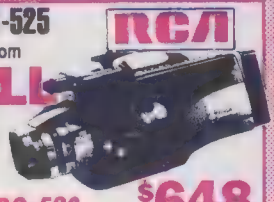


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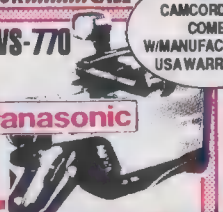
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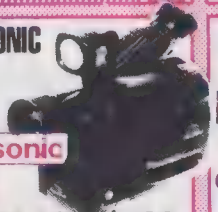
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continued from page 64

a bit more polished and subject-oriented than the Nikkodo versions. For example, the Pioneer video for Jerry Lee Lewis' "Great Balls of Fire" includes clips of the Killer in performance, while "Rock Around the Clock" features footage of a Bill Haley performance. Nikkodo's cookie-cutter videos concentrate on a parade of pretty young things intended to titillate rather than illustrate.

Moreover, many of the wedding-band quality instrumentals from both suppliers are unrecognizable—it helps if you've been singing with your karaoke of choice for the last 10 years. Starting notes are hard to come by; even a Beatles buff, like myself, had problems finding the right key for "Please Please Me." Many selections include long instrumental breaks, leaving the performer nonplussed during an already deflating experience. Sometimes the lyrics are just wrong.

However, by the end of a tie-loosening, high-spirited evening, these quirks actually contribute to the fun. At first everyone is curious, noses buried in song lists, but no one wants to sing. Then, the

continued on page 74

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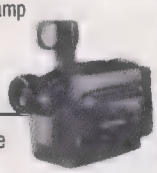
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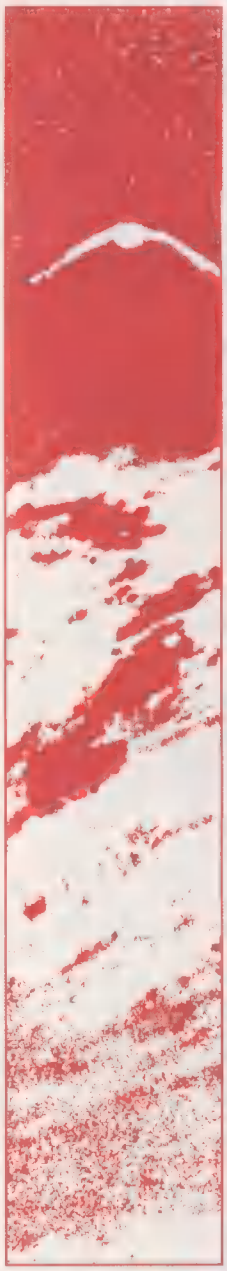
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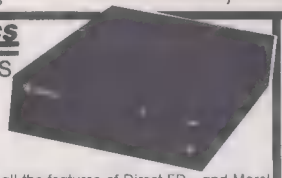
VT87HQ Features heavy duty wide angle fluid panhead & L/R switchable control handle Opens to 62" **$49.95**

VT90HQ Features professional panhead, tension adjustments and monster oversized legs. Opens to 72" **$79.95**



8mm Rewinder w/ Fast Forward
Includes infra red sensor to minimize snapping. Works with included AC adapter & also compatible with Sony Camcorder batteries (NP55, 77)
747XT Sale! **$39.95** (reg 49.95)

VIDEONICS
DirectED PLUS Super

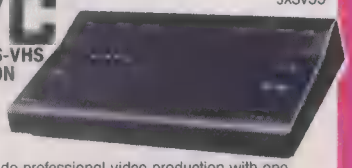


S-VHS/HI-8 Automatic Video Editor
DirectED+ Super includes all the features of Direct ED+ and More!
Features: ● EDIT Arrange your favorite scenes in any order ● TITLE Built-in Character generator internal graphics (12 type styles and 64 colors) ● SPECIAL EFFECTS 17 types of fades or wipes
Plus Super Features: ● Y/C inputs for Super VHS and Hi-8 ● Title scrolling capability ● Increased memory for additional graphics
Sale! **$699.00** (reg 749.00)



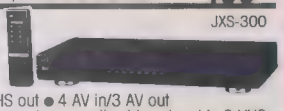
VIDEO EQUALIZER
The World's First DIGITAL Video Processor
Digital Paintbrush allows you to manipulate the colors in your videos to get the look of the latest TV commercials and music videos! Features: ● 3 Channel Audio Mixer ● Dual Outputs ● Split Screen ● Full Spectrum Color Processor ● Digital Enhancer ● SVHS Compatible
Sale! **$279.00** (reg 299.00)

JVC
JXSV55



ULTIMATE S-VHS PRODUCTION CENTER
Now you can do professional video production with one integrated, easy to use video processor
● SPECIAL EFFECTS - 16 wipes and fades to 8 colors ● IMAGE ENHANCER - Adds sharpness and detail ● COLOR PROCESSOR - Joystick color balancing ● 2 A/V in - 1 A/V out plus S-VHS in & Out **$499.00**

JXS-300



Remote Control A/V S-VHS Switcher
● 3 S-VHS in/3 S-VHS out ● 4 AV in/3 AV out ● Y/C separator to convert composite video signal to S-VHS ● High quality video amp. w/800 lines of resolution
Sale! **$249.00** (reg 299.00)
Also Available: JXS900
Remote Control 7in/7out A/V S-VHS Switcher . Includes 2 monitor outputs Dual operation provides 2 signal paths.
Sale! **$649.00**

---

sima ScreenWriter
S-VHS Character Generator



SCG
Now everyone can add titles to his favorate videos. Superimposes titles over existing video or generates title pages
Deluxe features include: ● Attractive white, black lettering ● 4 different sizes ● Scrolling for title pages ● 7 pages of memory
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PowerMax Plus 2
Completely Discharges & Quick Charges two Sony-type Batteries in one Cycle!!
Also features reconditioner to eliminate battery memory!
PLUS ● Quick charges in 1/2 the time ● AC or DC ● Battery Tester **$99.95**



SPM-4

SUNPAK²



RL20
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Super lightweight, compact video light, Includes replaceable NiCd battery & charger.
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CZ-200
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Custom Video Brackets For Your TR5 & Palmcorder
Fits between your Sony TR5 & battery providing a shoe on top.
VB1 For Sony TR5, 7
VB2 For Palmcorder
$19.95



Also Available:
Auto CV300- Top of the line cordless sensor light Features auto-adjust light (18-30w) 12-35 min battery & 2hr. Quick charger **$129.95**

AZDEN
WMS-PRO



Professional VHF Wireless Microphone System 250' Range
Includes powerful hand held & tie clip mics & 2 frequency operation. A must for quality audio. Sale **$149.00**
Also Available: WM/T-PRO Completely wireless hand held mic for above **$119.00**



ECZ660
Zoom Microphone
Picks up sound in front without side noices! 2 position - zoom/wide angle. Sale! **$59.00**

HS7V



HEADSET BOOM MIC
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Add narration as you're video taping! Monitor camcorder audio.



CAM-3
Microphone Mixer
Record and mix sound on your camcorder from 3 sources, while shooting! Connect 2 external mics plus background music to your camcorder's audio input.
SPECIAL **$49.95** (reg 59.95)

VIDCRAFT
SoundsRight



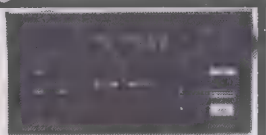
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Audio Mixer with Audio/Video Fade
Add background music or narration to your videos & fade picture, sound or both! Includes microphone **$39.95**

AMBICO
Professional Video Converter w/Title Kit



V0651
Converts your home movies, slides AND still photos to video. Built in macrolens assures sharp focus. **$79.95**

NEW! **FutureVideo**



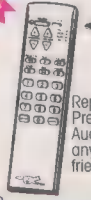
EC1000PRO HI-8/S-VHS Edit Controller
Performs assemble and insert editing - automatically! Accurate to within +/- 2 frames. Compatible with Panasonic industrial & Sony control L .
$595.00
We now carry the entire Future Video line - CALL!

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Rechargeable Camcorder Batteries



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NEW!	CB718	Canon A-1 Digital	$39.95
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	SBT22	Sharp BT21,22	$44.95
	CB722	Canon E77, E808 1 1/2hr	$34.95

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Universal Remote Control
Replaces up to 6 different remote controls! Preprogrammed for many popular Audio/Video components **and** will learn from any remote!! Features easy access, user friendly keys.
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DELUXE TELECINE



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CITIZEN
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LCD Color Monitor
Monitor your videos in full color as you tape! Portable 3" color monitor mounts on any camcorder. Complete w/ battery pack, cords, hood & bracket. **$159.95**

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PV 704	639.00	PV 19	549.00
PV 710	649.00	PV-21	599.00
PV 720	749.00	PV 31	CALL
PV 750	899.95	PV-41	839.00
PV-760	969.00	PV-10	499.00
PV S770	1139.00	PV-20	549.00
PV 610	729.00	PV-40	729.00
PV 660	1049.00	PV-602	609.00
PV 645	749.00	PV-S575	CALL

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PV 2110	219.95	PV-S4990	1099.00
PV 4110	239.95	PV-7000	259.00
PV 4114	249.99	PV-4060	309.00
PV 4120	279.99	PV-4960	339.00
PV 4127	309.99	PV-4962	389.00
PV 4160	319.95	PV-4970	399.00
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PV 4070	459.00	PV CC50	259.00
LX-1000	599.00	LX 200	449.00
LX 101	CALL	PV-VP1 Vid Prtr.	879.00

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PV M429	979.00	PV-M2049	639.00
PVM 2021	449.00	PV-M2050	849.00

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AG 7650	3299.00	AG-190	799.00
AG 7750	4750.00	AG-450	1139.00
AG 1250	269.00	AG-460	2629.00
AG 1730	499.00	WV-KB12A	149.95
WV F70	1999.95	WJ TTL5	219.95
WV F250	CALL	AG EP60	929.00
AG 850	1389.00	WJMX 12	1739.00
AG 7400	1929.00	AG-1960	919.00
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CT 2082Y	329.00	AG-520	549.00
CT 2581VY	529.00	AG 560	719.00
CT 2582Y	459.00	CT 1382Y	225.00

SONY

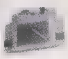
CAMCORDERS

CCD TR51	689.00	CCD-TR81	899.00
CCD TR9	729.00	CCD TR4	579.00
CCD F55	569.00	CCD TR6	599.00
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CCD F101	1089.00	CCD-F301	579.00
CCD F45	669.00	CCD F401	649.00
CCD V5000	1920.00	CCD-F501	859.00
CCD SP9	899.00	CCD-V801	1199.00
CCD V701	929.00	CCD-F201	549.00

VCR's

SLV 373	299.00	EV-P2	269.00
SLV 585	389.00	EV-C3	299.00
SLV 686	429.00	EV-DT1	709.00
SLV R5	839.00	GV 200	749.00
EVS 550	569.00	GV-300	899.00
EVS 900	1499.00	SL-S600	269.00

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XVT-33 Video Sketch Titler
- Video Workshop
- Titles, Graphics
- Draw Your Own Pictures & Overlay Them On Live Video
- SVHS Connectors, Compatible With All Formats

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XVD-300	239.00
RM-E80 Editor	119.95
RM-E100VA Editor	159.95
RME-300 Editing Controller	499.00
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XVC-900 Color Corrector	789.00
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RM-155K Wireless Remote	99.95
RM-152 Wireless Remote	89.95
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ACV-55N One Hr. Batt. Charger	159.95
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NP-11	49.95	NP-77	39.95
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CAMCORDERS

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GF-700	769.00	GR-AX10U	659.00
GRS 707	829.00	GR-303U	669.00
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VCR's

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HRD X40V	234.95	HRD-940	369.00
HRD 740	239.00	HRP-IU	739.00
HRD 760	299.00	HRD-920	329.00
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HRD 780	309.00	HRS-C1000	729.00
HRD 910	339.00	HRS-4700	449.00
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VN-500	799.95	VN-310	CALL
VN 840	699.00	VN 700	849.95

5 Year Warranty .... NO CHARGE

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M 890	829.00
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VF-KL7 Wide Lens	69.95
VF BA4 Compact AC Adp	99.95

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KX 77	CALL	KX-H1	CALL
KDH-170	1029.00	KDM-770	CALL
KD M 730	599.95	KX-90	699.95
RJ 3010 Rain Jacket			19.95

RCA

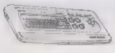
CAMCORDERS

CC 180	CALL	CC-390	639.00
PRO-815	CALL	CC-391	609.95
PRO 820	CALL	CC-405	579.95
PRO-825	CALL	CC-415	CALL
PRO 850	CALL	CC-445	CALL
PRO-860	CALL	CC-510	CALL
PRO 865	CALL	CC 512	CALL
PRO 880	CALL	CC-520	CALL
CC 285	699.95	CC-525	CALL
CC 320	749.00	CC 560	CALL

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VR 295	249.00	VR-550	CALL
VR 301	199.00	VR-660	CALL
VR 335	225.00	VR-665	CALL
VR-341	CALL	VR-680	CALL
VR-345	244.95	VR-690	CALL
VR 505	249.00	VR-685	CALL
VR 515	CALL	VR-696	CALL
VR 521	CALL	VR-740	CALL

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VCC1000 244.95

- Adjust white balance, color intensity, tint & sharpness • Creates split screen for comparison viewing • Enhancement circuit prevents quality loss when you dub tapes • Color bar generator helps adjust monitor or TV before picture correction • Character generator can create 72 kinds of characters in 4 different sizes with scrolling • S-VHS compatible

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CBC 120 12 Volt 2Hr. Batt	59.95
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CRM020 Remote Control	25.95
CRF020 RF Adapter	39.95
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EX 153 1.5x tele	74.95
WM003 Wireless Mike	79.95

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8-808	839.00	C-606	599.00
8-418	CALL	V-20R	639.00
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C-516	CALL	V-16R	599.00
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BA-8000S Car batt. Adapter	69.95
BX 8000 Charger Base	49.95
VCG 10 Character Generator	99.95
VFT 1 Film Transfer Adapter	119.95
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VIC 3 Stereo Input Cord	29.95
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VM 714	839.00	VH-6215	299.00
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VL 50	669.00	VLL-10	599.00
VL 7100	589.00	VLL-650U	CALL
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VL 1700	599.	VL-MX8U	CALL
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VL 2700	629.00	BT-22	49.95

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VM 5450	759.00	VM-H18	1079.00
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R-105	CALL	R-66	649.95
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VX 81	559.00	VX-806	549.00
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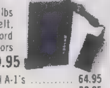
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A-1 Digital	[illegible]	E-63	599.00
H-460	899.00	E-67	829.00
E-808	799.00	E-08	609.95
E 40	599.00	E-09	979.00
E-57	569.00	H-800	799.00
E 61	549.00	H-850	969.00
E-65	719.00	UC-1	729.00
UC-20	CALL	UC-S1	1099.00
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10,000 MAH Batt Pack gives you up to 7 hours on Any Canon Camcorder



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WL-50 Remote Control	49.95
CB-E7 Car Batt Adapter	66.95
CB-110 Car Batt Adapter	67.95
CRE7K Charge Coupler	54.95
CA-E7A Compact Power Adp.	99.95
MM-100 Mixing Mike	104.95
DM-300 Super Direc. Mike	79.95
MM-200 Stereo Mix Mike	139.95
WD-55 Wide Converter	79.95
TL-55 Telephoto Converter	79.95
TL-55L 3x Tele Converter	239.95
SF-200 Sports Finder	39.95
Graphic/Music Chips f/H850	CALL

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TL-37 Tele	59.95	TL-46 Tele	79.95
BP-E4 Batt. F/VM-E1			49.95
BP-E718	54.95	BP-E77K	39.95
VL-20 Lite	54.95	BP-E722	64.95
VL-7	34.95	VL-30	89.95

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M 442	219.00	SV-771	499.00
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HS CX7U	949.00	HSU-65	689.00
HS C35U	1149.00	HSU-82	CALL
HSU 3?	289.00	HSU-55	469.00
HSU 34			299.00

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CG 681	569.00	CG-700	569.00
CG 695	569.00	CG 710	989.00
CG 697	779.00	Hard Case	39.95

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VG 7980	339.00	VG-4012	235.00
VG 7985	369.00	VG-4009	239.00
VG 7001	189.00	VG-4016	229.00
VG 7003	199.00	VG-4018	259.00
VG 7014	209.00	VG-4200	299.00
VG 7016	199.00	VG-4216	299.00
VG 7007	199.00	VG-4202	309.00
VG 7010	199.00	VG-4218	339.00

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CVM 710	629.00	VR-9925	219.00
CVM 720	CALL	VR-9942	239.00
CVL 320	719.00	VR-9946	249.00
CVL 325	749.00	VR-9960	349.00
CVL 335	849.00	VR-9965	309.00
CVL 345	929.00	VR-9970	499.00
CVL 610	649.00	VR-9980	699.00

CAMCORDER SHOULDER REST



For Most Camcorder Models

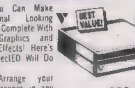
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EASY TO USE: On-screen instructions, wireless remote control plus previewing.
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Libr 3 "Travel & Vacation"	39.95
Libr 4 "Sports & Recreation"	39.95
Libr 5 "Title Style Library"	39.95

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Video Titlemaker	269.00

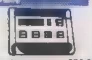
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The World's First
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Digital Paintbrush allows you to manipulate the colors in your videos to get the look of the latest TV commercials and music videos! Features: • 3 Channel Audio Mixer • Dual Outputs • Split Screen • Full Spectrum Color Processor • Digital Enhancer • SVHS Compatible. **$229.95**

Processor Plus 174.95

AZDEN



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274.95

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AVS-10 A-V Switcher	59.95
AVS 20 Switcher w. MIC Mixing	74.95
Audio Input Cord f/VE-100	19.95

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VCR-3044 Aud./Video Proc.	299.00
VCR-4044 Aud. Video Proc.	599.00

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V 0635 Reviser	79.95
V-6310 Mixer Enhancer	44.95
V-6306 Audio Video Color Fader	59.95
V 6305 Video Color Processor	44.95
V-6300 Editing Effect Mixer	249.95

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XV 100	1749.00
XV 1?07U	2975.00
XV 101	3279.00
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PRO VISION

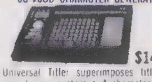
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EDL-1000 Software Program	259.00
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Campak 12 Volt	144.95
Campak Pro 12 Volt 4 Pin	159.95
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M-150 150w light	39.95
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M 75 AC/DC Light	139.95
K 102 Light Kit	139.95

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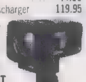
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Uses Sony-Type Battery
Case Holds 6AA Cells (Nicads & Charger Included) **$39.95**

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V 0853 Battery F 0855	44.95
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STRV-16G	2859.00	TRV-35G	2149.00
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16-CLTC 16 MM Tele-Cine Projector			1599.00

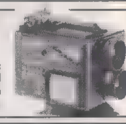
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- Includes converter unit, multicoated macro lens and adjustable stand.
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972	CALL	979	CALL
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V-0385 1.5X/0.6X Lens Set 37mm	49.95
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3122	111.79	3135	219.95
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3124	107.95	3142	214.95
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3161	129.95	3067 Dolly	159.95
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3175	99.95	3176	129.95
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KV 20TS27	339.00	KV CX10	1699.95
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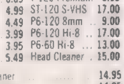
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T120EX	2.69	L-750 Beta	3.49
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T120XL HiFi	3.49	T-60 HS	4.29
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TC20HGX/GD	3.69	T-160 EHG	4.99
TC20RX Pro	4.85	ST160 XP Super	10.70
TC30HGX	4.99	TC-20 EHG	3.49
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8mm 30	3.69	STC30 XP Spr	7.99
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8mm ■	4.49	8mm 30	3.09
8mm 120	4.99	8mm 60	3.59
8mm HGX 30	4.69	8mm 90	4.19
8mm HGX 60	4.39	8mm 120	4.09
8mm HGX ■	5.20	HI-8 MP30	4.59
8mm HGX120	6.29	HI-8 MP60	5.29
HI-8 MP60	5.20	HI-8 MP90	5.89
HI-8 MP90	5.59	HI-8 MP120	7.39
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ST-120 S-VHS	7.09	T-120 Pro-X	5.90
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P6-90 HG 8MM	4.59	HI-8 120 ME	11.99
P6-120 HG 8MM	5.39	HI-8 60 ME	10.20
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8MM 90	4.49	P6-120 8mm	9.00
8MM 60	3.99	P6-120 Hi-8	17.00
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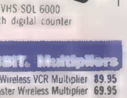


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SOLIDEX

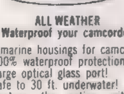


VIDEO CASSETTE REWINDER & FAST FORWARD VHS-SOL 6000 with digital counter $24.95

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AZDEN



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WHX-PRO Handheld VHF Wireless Mic			179.00
WM. T PRO			94.95
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WMS-100	69.95	WMS-200	79.95
WMS-30	69.96	WMS-40	109.95
WM T 30	44.95	ECV-330	29.95
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HS-7V	14.95	Transfer It	24.95
Titles Special Effects Tape			19.95

JVC

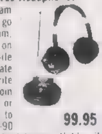
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MZ-707 Stereo Zoom Mic	129.95
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NADY



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Wireless Stereo Headphones



Now you can roam around the house, go from room to room, even go outside on the patio while listening in private to your favorite stereo music from your home stereo or stereo TV, thanks to the Nady WH-90 Wireless Stereo Headphones. Unlike its infrared predecessors, Nady systems new stereo headphones utilize crystal controlled radio transmitter receiver technology to deliver superior sound quality, true stereo separation and several times the range of infrared models. 99.95

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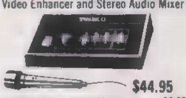
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$44.95

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Sony ECM-55/UT-4/UR-4	1269.00
Sony ECM-77/UT-4/UR-4	1325.00
Sennheiser MKE-2/UT-4/UR-4	1349.00

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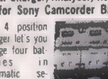
Shure SM-58 Mic/UH-4/UR-4	1199.00
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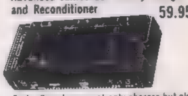
NC-M01
Multi-Charger/Analyser/Reconditioner for Sony Camcorder Batteries.



- 4 position charger let's you charge four batteries in automatic sequence. Charge NP-55 in 30 minutes. • Position 4 works as a battery analyser, reconditioner, and charger. • Can be used as an AC Adaptor for your camcorder. Automatic voltage sensor for overseas use. 109.95

ARKON

TURBO CAMCHARGER™
Advanced Camcorder Battery Charger and Reconditioner 59.95



Turbo Camcharger not only charges but also reconditions batteries to eliminate the memory buildup that occurs in nicd batteries used by camcorders. "Memory build-up" prevents your battery from receiving a full charge, causing it to go dead ■ a short period of time. By using Turbo Camcharger, you will increase the life of your batteries. It's that simple. Turbo Camcharger also offers the convenience of AC/DC operation so you can use it away from home.

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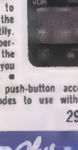
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CP8 Universal Remote	59.95

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UNIFIED REMOTE CONTROL



- Compact, light-weight design. • 19 Large, colorful, user-friendly keys to prevent pressing the wrong key accidentlly. • Easy-to-use operation simplifies the basic commands you use most often. • Quick and easy push-button access of factory preset codes to use with other brands. 29.95

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CCD-F455	899.00	CCD-TR105	979.00
CCD-F375	839.00	CCD-TR75	999.00
CCD-F555	1089.00	CCD-TR705	1329.00
CCD-V700	1189.00	EVC-3	529.00
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M-8000 S-VHS	1189.	G2E VHS-C	799.00
G-100 VHS-C	649.00	NV-S1 VHS-C	749.00
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NVS-500 S-VHS-C			1099.00

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WJ-AVE 5	1099.00	AG-7330	2529.00
WJ-MX12	2299.00	AG-500	925.00
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World Traveler 16 Standard 4 Head	CALL

CANON

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VSF12EDG	259.00	VSP9EM	189.00
VS-F320	279.00	VSS99EV SVHS	879.
VS-F410	349.00	VSF16	269.00
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AIWA PAL

MG-300	529.00

JVC PAL

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SONY

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KV-1984 19" 15 Sys	449.00
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KV-2153 21" Stereo 9 Sys	589.00
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Videonics Equalizer	429.00
Ambico V0629 Enhanc/Mixer	59.95
Ambico V0808 6.5 Amp Batt Belt	59.95
Ambico V0870 20 Watt Light	59.95
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100 Watt AC 200 Volt	44.95
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Sima Edit 3 Pal	179.95

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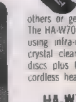


INFRASOUND IR500 Cordless Headset lets you **listen privately to TV,** as loud as you like, **without disturbing others.**

Additional Receiver IR501	34.95

JVC

Digital Wireless Stereo Headphones



Now you can listen to your favorite music or TV show ■ loud as you want without disturbing others or getting tangled-up cords! The HA-W70 transmits the music digitally using infra-red signals so you get the crystal clear sound quality of compact discs plus the privacy and freedom of cordless headphones.

HA-W70 $169.95

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MDR-CD6	84.95	MDR-CD550	69.95
MDR-84	39.95	MDR-CD250	39.95
MDR-CD666XR			109.95
MDR-CD888XR			109.95
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SF-8000 Boss	109.95
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FO-130	349.00	FO-230	499.00
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M-1100	349.00	M-1850	539.00
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KX-F195	529.00	KX-F155	429.00
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SONY

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RD-4120	104.95	RD-3183	139.95
RD-6000			169.95

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956W	157.50	990M	179.95
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966 Legend	199.95	952-R	149.95
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WM-F2081	59.95	SRF-M50	44.95
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FF-1750	104.95	FF-675	114.95
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Will karaoke catch on in the U.S.? Almost everyone at the party who protested early on was fighting for the mic later on. Baritone Bob called me a few days later to ask where he could rent a machine, and Macho Steve insisted on borrowing my karaoke caboodle for a party of his own. Once exposed, everyone is curious; once tried, it's addictive. After all, everyone wants to be a rock 'n' roll star, even if it's only for three off-key minutes. ■

TECH TIP

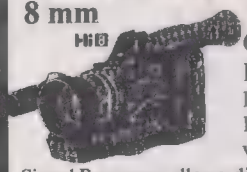
Lighten up

When you're shooting in a dark room and need just a few more lux of light, shine a small flashlight at the camcorder lens. That's right—at the lens, not at the subject. You will be amazed at the results.

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Portland, Oregon

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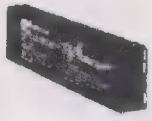
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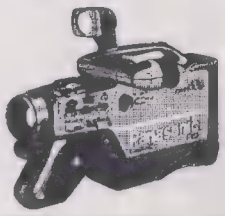


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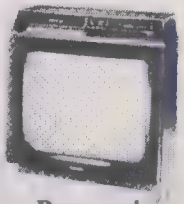
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PV710	PVS770	PV41
PV720		



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8MM Deck	D ☐

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Laserdisc Player/Combination Player	F ☐
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8MM Deck	D ☐

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Laserdisc Player/Combination Player	F ☐
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0	I ☐	O ☐	U ☐
1-9	J ☐	P ☐	V ☐
10-25	K ☐	Q ☐	W ☐
26-49	L ☐	R ☐	X ☐
50-99	M ☐	S ☐	Y ☐
100+	N ☐	T ☐	Z ☐

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166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180
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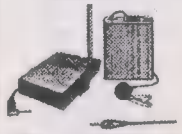
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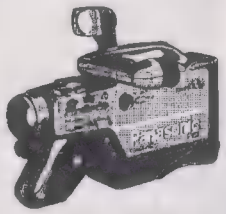


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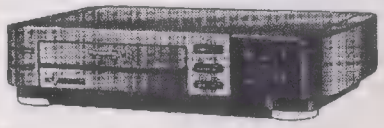
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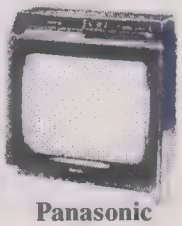
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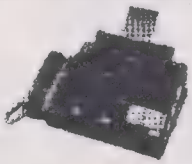


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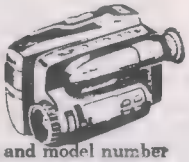
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SHOWDOWN

continued from page 28

bles from the front of the set.

JVC's AV-3591S tied the ProScan with a 3.4 average picture rating. Its was the only tube the panelists felt was competitive with smaller tubes in convergence, corner focus and distortion. But buyers should be prepared to tweak. The panelists felt the factory settings were useless, and that the set needed constant adjustment to look good. It occasionally produced slight doming.

Like the Mitsubishi, the JVC confused the panelists, who found its picture gauzy and soft, but quite good for certain subjects. Indeed, it handily outperformed the other monster monitors in reproducing the natural tones of *The Bear* (Columbia TriStar). But the set's Dolby Three-Channel Logic sound system didn't confuse them a bit: With an average audio score of 3, it sounded best. Its performance can be attributed to large, front-firing speakers, and to the center speaker built into its bezel.

RCA's F35100ST uses extensive digital circuitry, and as a result, its picture takes on an almost-pixelated look similar to that of high-end computer graphics. The panelists found this trait both good and bad. They gave the set strong marks in sharpness, contrast and shadow detail, but criticized its color accuracy. One panelist picked the RCA's very warm picture as his favorite. "It has a strong, contrasty picture, achieved at a slight cost in graininess," he said.

Like the ProScan, the RCA has a fun and useful digital zoom feature. But it produced the most noticeable doming of the showdown sets. Its performance on color bars was problematic, but that didn't bother the panelists. As we've often seen in our panel tests, poor performance on a test pattern doesn't necessarily show up as a problem during actual video programs. And great test pattern performance doesn't necessarily make for a great picture.

The RCA's speaker layout seems to be identical to that of the ProScan. With a 2.9 average audio score, its performance was equally satisfying, but equally lacking in volume. It doesn't have the surround circuitry or the graphic equalizer of the ProScan, but it has something that, for everyday viewing, may be even better: Hughes SRS circuitry, which produces very pleasing surround effects using only two speakers.

SHOWDOWN SYNOPSIS

After spending two evenings with the monster monitors, our panelists were hard-pressed to declare a winner. "Overall, the pictures are pretty good once carefully adjusted," one said. "The sound is only good enough for casual use, but anyone who cares about TV sound will have an external sound system hooked up anyway."

None of the panelists expressed enthusiasm for the 35-inch size. All said they would have preferred models in the 30- to 32-inch range. These slightly smaller tubes suffer less from geometric distortion and focus problems, and based on our experience, they tend to produce more accurate color with less doming.

Some of the panelists said they would recommend big-screen enthusiasts spend a few hundred dollars more for a rear-projection set. As we found in our last big-screen shootout ("Clash of the Titans," Sept. '91), rear-projection technology has matured so much in the last few years that it can satisfy even picky videophiles like us.

But because 35-inch sets have proven so popular, we expect bigger and better things in this category. The advantages of direct-view sets are undeniable – their bright pictures penetrate ambient light much better than those of projection sets, they need no convergence adjustment and they have the potential to produce more accurate color. Technology marches on, and we expect to soon see the unbelievably good pictures of slightly smaller sets translated to the biggest tubes you can buy. ■

ART OF THE WIN

continued from page 29

outstanding shots by watching movies, especially those of the Coen brothers (who produced and directed *Miller's Crossing* and *Raising Arizona*), because they use many unusual camera angles.

By contrast, Ballot didn't even own a camcorder when he shot his family event video, *Our Wedding Invitation*. He used an old tube video camera (purchased used with a portable VCR for $150) and recorded straight to one of his Panasonic AG-1960 S-VHS VCRs.

Because he shot almost all of the video in his apartment, he never had to edit it. "We would do a take," he recalls, "and if we didn't like it, we'd rewind the tape and do it again. That way the copies we sent were second generation.

"Nothing shouts 'amateur' more than an unstable camera," he stresses, "so you should use a tripod whenever possible. And always use headphones to monitor your audio. This way, you can detect problems like hum, which can be caused by bunched-up cables."

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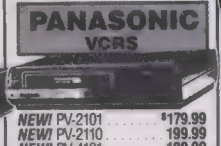
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To edit your video, plug your camcorder into your VCR's audio/video input. Select line input from the front panel or the onscreen menu. Put a blank tape in the VCR. Keep the camcorder's lens cap on, and record 15 seconds of black video before you start editing. Now hit the VCR's pause button. Unless your VCR has a flying erase head, you can't hit its stop button until you finish editing. Otherwise, you'll get a glitch and a rainbow effect between shots.

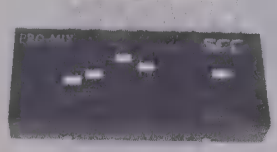
Scan the camcorder tape and write down the counter numbers of the scenes you want to use. Cue up the first one from a point several seconds before the beginning of the first scene. Roll the camcorder tape, then hit the VCR's pause button where you want the scene to start. Hit the pause button again when you want the scene to end. Repeat the procedure for each scene.

To add titles, write or type them out, then shoot them. You can also use items like postcards and signs as your titles.

Investing $50 or so in an audio mixer can give your tape much better sound. Connect your camcorder, a microphone and a CD player or audio cassette deck to the mixer, and connect the mixer's output to your VCR's audio input. Connect the video straight from the camcorder to the VCR. This setup will let you mix in narration and music while you edit your video.

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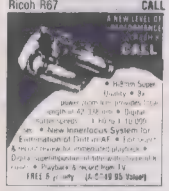
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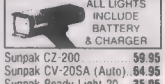
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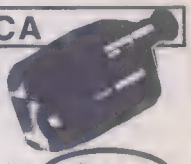
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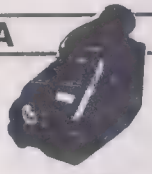
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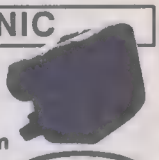
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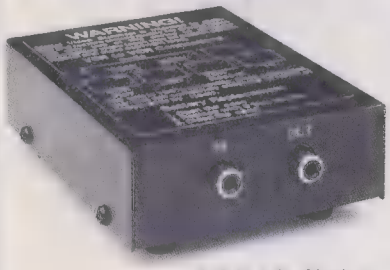
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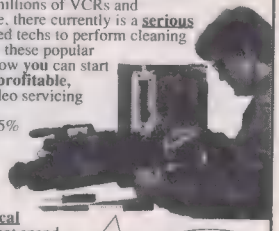
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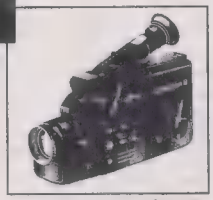
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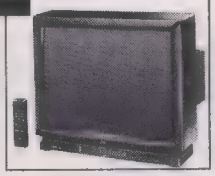
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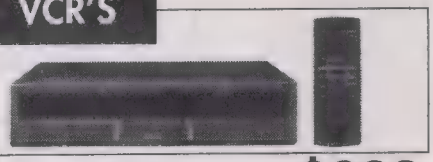
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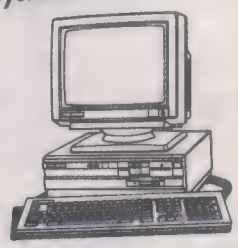
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GREAT ESCAPE

continued from page 41

three amplifiers handle center, front and rear channels, while a pair of XL1 speakers directly above the big screen deliver plenty of center-channel impact. The main front speakers are McIntosh XRT18s that were electronically adjusted for the room's acoustics with the help of an environmental equalizer.

To maintain signal quality throughout the house, Behrens relied on a variety of specialized components, including interconnects by Monster Cable, an active surge suppressor by Panamax and a Viewsonics 20-decibel active video splitter. ■

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David B. Graham
1461-B North Point Lane
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

I have searched many catalogs trying to find *The Mudlark*. Alas, no success. This film tells the story of a little boy who, after looking through the basement window of Buckingham Palace, falls into the coal bin. After being cleaned up by the servants, he eventually gets to meet Queen Victoria. It may be British; I saw it in the late '40s or '50s in France.

Floyd W. King
436 Harbour View Drive
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Collectors of old B-westerns: This has to be one of the toughest films to find. I am looking for a pre-1962 western in which men would vie for the "honor" of carrying women across the town's muddy streets. I do not know the title, and *any* help would be appreciated. All expenses will be gladly reimbursed.

Jack Stotzer
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Bill Pagel
Box 5493
Madison, WI 53705

Way back in 1978 or '79, George Lucas had a made-for-TV *Star Wars* Christmas special, telling how Chewbacca was reunited with his family on his home planet. It also included a Luke Skywalker cartoon short.

I have tried for years to find tapes of this show, but to no avail: Not many people had VCRs back then. To my knowledge, the show has never been repeated. If anyone can help me find a VHS copy, I will pay any expenses involved.

Mario Kennedy
1945 Berkeley Way
Berkeley, CA 94704



Favorite Pastime: The Brooklyn Dodgers.

Duke Snyder was voted into the Baseball Hall of Fame around 1980. As a tribute to him and the Brooklyn Dodgers, Joel Siegel of Channel 7 in New York hosted a 30-minute ABC special called *The Duke of Flatbush...and Other Bums*. I've been looking for a VHS copy of this very moving piece for several years, and am more than willing to reimburse for taping costs.

Dr. Steven Feinberg
405 Washington Avenue
Point Richmond, CA 94801

I have material to trade for VHS copies of the PBS series *At the Top* with Buddy Rich, Maynard Ferguson, Woody Herman and Count Basie, and *The Big Bands* TV series with Stan Kenton, Harry James, Duke Ellington, Claude Thornhill and Woody Herman.

Michael P. Romano
63 Sander Street
New London, CT 06320

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Danny Coco
509 Lyon Avenue
Wheaton, IL 60187

The local public broadcasting station has stopped running the *Doctor Who* series, just as we have become ardent fans. Our enthusiasm is such that our parents are taping programs in other parts of the country and sending them to us.

Currently, we have a small collection of episodes starring Tom Baker and Peter Davidson, and would very much like to expand our holdings.

Russ A. and Patricia B. Hart
3772 West Beechwood Avenue
Fresno, CA 93711-0649

Help! I have been searching, without success, for a copy of the 1986 film *Desert Hearts* with Helen Shaver and Patricia Charbonneau. I will be eternally grateful to anyone with a VHS copy, and will gladly pay for postage and a tape.

Anna Medeiros
1370 Akamai Street
Kailua, HI 96734

I am trying to locate two made-for-TV adaptations of Danielle Steel novels, *Kaleidoscope* and *Fine Things*. They aired on consecutive nights in 1990, October 15 and 16. I will pay all costs for VHS copies.

Lynda Homme
9787 Harbour Pointe Drive
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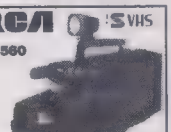
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Nikon CAMCORDERS

VN 310	VN 850
VN 700	VN 860
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RCA CAMCORDERS

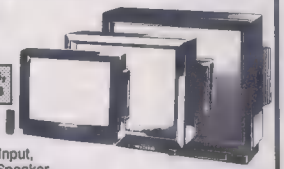
PRO 880	PRO 820
PRO 860	CC-560
PRO 865	CC-525

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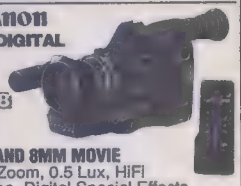
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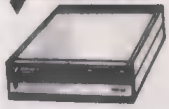
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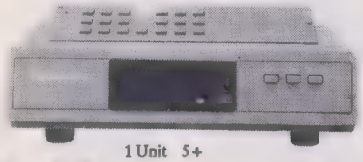
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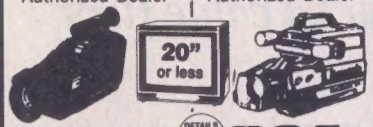
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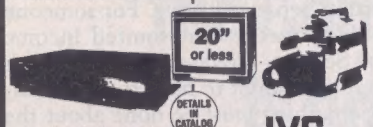
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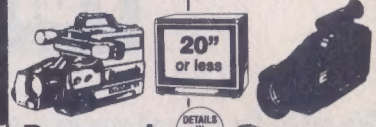
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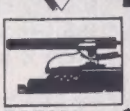
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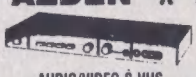
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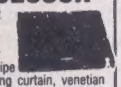
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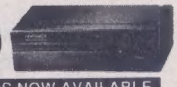
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READER FORUM

Poor video, dull audio, high fees & low service fuel a cable fury

We asked for it—and you gave it. In "The Trouble With Cable," our January feature about problems facing cable TV subscribers, we said we'd like to hear your own stories. The response has been a flood of detailed, outraged letters from more than two dozen states and Puerto Rico. The letters describe a multitude of problems, from buzzing audio to apathetic service, and recommend a number of solutions, with one demand standing above the rest: Require cable companies to compete, either with other cable companies or new forms of video transmission. And if this requires re-regulation by Congress, then that's what should be done.

We have sent copies of your letters to the Senate Communications Subcommittee, which is considering cable re-regulation, and have offered to testify in person, in the course of further congressional hearings, about the problems you've shared with us. Below, we offer a selection of your comments.

When I read "The Trouble With Cable" I was relieved to see my views expressed in a national magazine. The subject bothers me because cable TV companies cry about "unfair" competition while economically raping their subscribers and peddling an inferior product. I won't go cold turkey when it comes to relinquishing cable, but I did have HBO disconnected and I turned in my additional converter box for a savings of $18 per month.

Wayne Osborne Jr.
East Orange, New Jersey

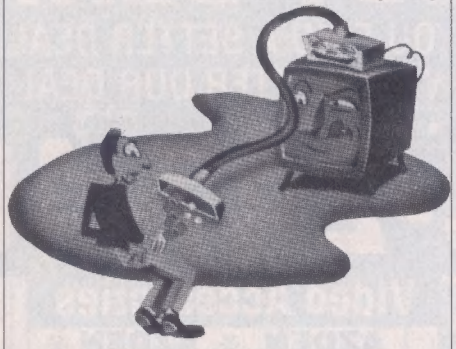
As a cable TV subscriber, I thank you for the chance to voice my complaints. What are they? The abusive system of allowing credit for non-signal periods, a poor signal, bad treatment by cable personnel, advance monthly billings, excessive reconnection charges and the movement of channels to higher frequencies to force box rental. Re-regulation is long overdue.

Gonzalo E. Rubiano
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

I am fed up with the questionable business practices, rate increases and shoddy service of the cable industry. The last straw came last Dec. 7, when I tuned to HBO to watch the Foreman/Ellis fight only to discover the video portion was blacked out. I already pay to receive HBO, a 24-hour premium channel for movies, concerts and special sporting events. I consider this unadulterated fraud, and an ugly precedent.

Will cable systems be able to arbitrarily black out and resell popular programs we have already paid for as pay-per-view events? They will unless the cable industry is re-regulated and real competition is introduced.

Michael Ventriello
Brick, New Jersey



My horror stories are from both sides of the fence. I used to work for a large cable company. But after four years, I was terminated because I always complained about the poor quality of their signals and service. Now, as a subscriber, I find my own picture quality is horrible: snowy, grainy pictures with white dots on some channels and all kinds of electrical interference. The sound is so terrible on the stereo channels that I even sold my Dolby Pro-Logic stereo receiver, as the buzzing made it unlistenable.

Terry Hammer
Mansfield, Ohio

I think the $25.21 I pay each month for "primary service" is absurd. That's more than $300 a year. Most cable stations carry advertisements. The major networks get along on advertisements alone. In terms of magazines, cable is like taking 12 subscriptions a year. Throw in a couple of premium channels and an extra two outlets, and my cable bill would be equivalent to buying a new 27-inch Sony TV set every year.

Steve Hankison
Gahanna, Ohio

The group of citizens that suffers the most because of cable companies is the elderly. Many cannot leave their homes or read due to cataracts or some other problem. Cable often provides the only entertainment they have. For someone who lives on the very limited income Social Security provides, $20 a month is a criminal amount to have to pay for cable. Something must be done about the cable companies, and right away.

Kristin C. Sabo
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

I have two hi-fi VCRs, a combi player, a Dolby Surround receiver and a 26-inch monitor/receiver. But the cable-ready capabilities of my system have been negated because the cable signal is scrambled at the converter box. Because of this, I not only have to program my VCR, but the converter, which has limited capabilities. Furthermore, the converter does not adequately carry the sound signal. It is nowhere near the quality of a broadcast signal. The poor sound and video signal, as well as the slavery imposed by The Box, are constant reminders of what happens when there is no competition.

Charles T. Wittig
Baltimore, Maryland

Cable in the Boston area is awful, but we get no reception without it, so it's a necessary evil. But let me list a few of the problems: grainy picture, ghosts, no MTS on premium channels (we'd subscribe if this was offered), and it's wickedly expensive—our highest utility.

Roger Grodsky
Brighton, Massachusetts

My cable provider has chosen to scramble *every* channel. The effect is to create a one-channel service as far as my VCRs and TV sets are concerned. This makes it impossible to record one program while watching another and renders useless the picture-in-picture and dual tuner features on one of my TV sets. The inability to use the so-called cable-ready features I paid for is irritating, at best. It is time for cable providers to recognize the reality of their consumers' equipment and expectations.

Lawrence Scott Rosenberg
Van Nuys, California

NED SHAW

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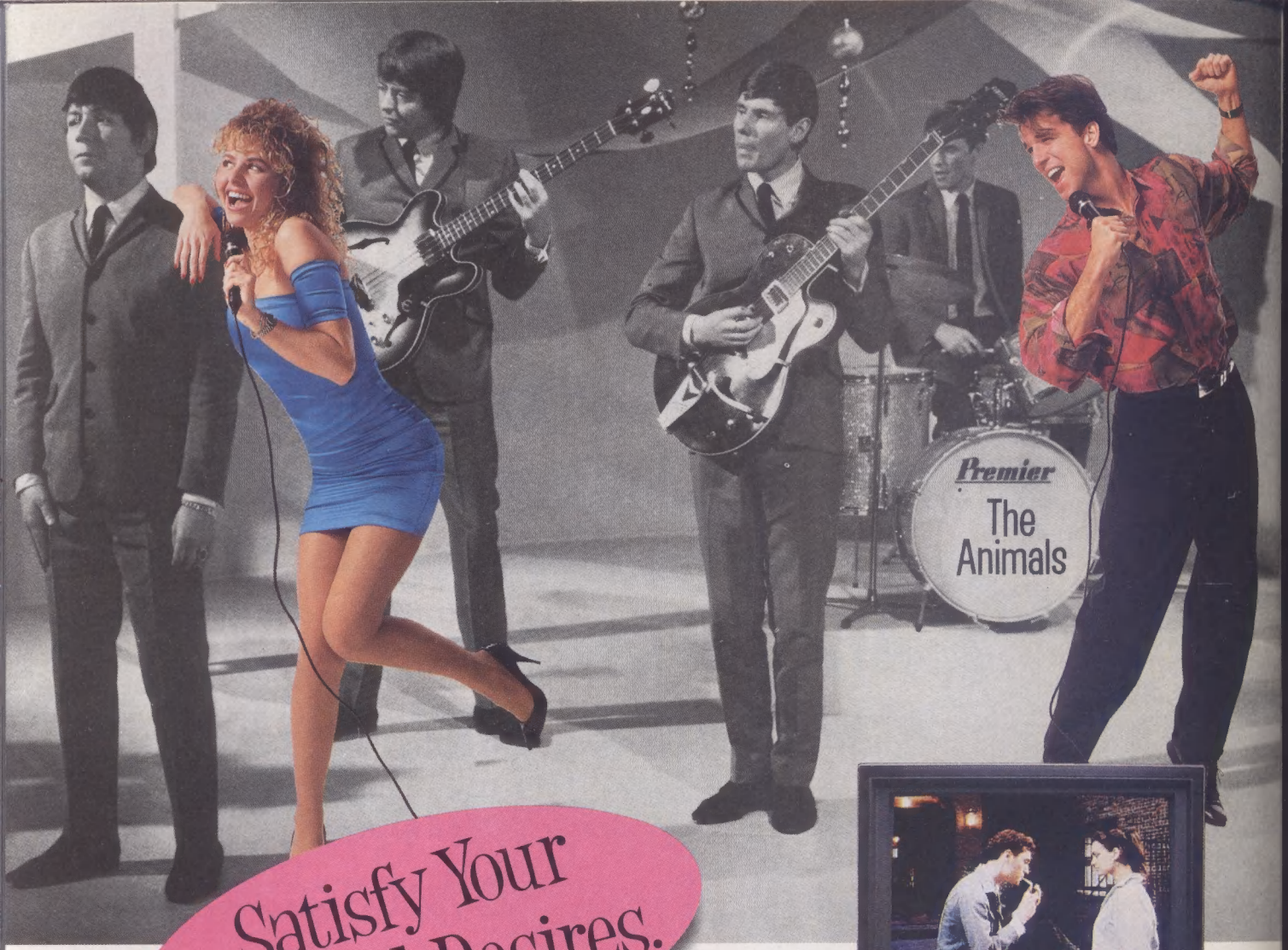


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